

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

**Grades K-8 Catechetical Program Inventory
2009-2010**

The Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee conducted a survey of parish religious education programs during June-July 2010. 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.¹

Responses were received from 143 of 210 parishes--a 68 percent response rate.² These responses came from 120 lay ecclesial ministers, several of whom serve more than one parish. They identified themselves by name, title, parish, and parish contact information. This document reports on their responses to the survey questions.³

Position titles

50 respondents (42 percent) said their job title was Director of Religious Education (DRE). This was by far the most common title. Other common titles included Director of Child Ministry, Christian Formation Director and Director of Faith Formation or Life Long Faith Formation. All 120 respondents answered this question.

Areas of responsibility

Over 80 percent of the respondents to the K-8 questionnaire 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.

Area of responsibility	# of responses	% of responses
K-5 catechesis	105	90%
Sacramental preparation	101	86%
6-8 catechesis	94	80%
9-12 catechesis	68	58%
Conformation preparation	67	57%
Youth ministry	47	40%

117 respondents answered this question.

¹ Data compiled and report prepared by Jenann Olsen.

² This was an excellent response rate, particularly considering the timing of the survey, June and July, the time most parishes are ending or have ended their catechetical programs for the year.

³ The responses in this report will not all add to 120 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 they were 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 20 percent of those responding were involved in a collaborative program with more than one parish. To explain the 20 percent reference, note that 81 percent of the respondents said they were responsible for one parish only and respondents could and did respond positively to both other alternatives.

Parish collaboration	# of responses	% of responses
Responsible for one parish only	95	81%
Responsible for joint/collaborative programs in more than one parish	20	17%
Collaborate with a staff person from another parish on a joint program	8	7%

117 respondents answered this question.

Program collaboration

Of the 28 respondents involved in collaborative programs, the largest number, 24 (86 percent) collaborated on sacramental preparation programs; over two-thirds also collaborated on catechetical programs.

Collaborative programs	# of responses	% of responses
Sacramental preparation	24	86%
K-5 catechetical programs	17	68%
6-8 catechetical programs	17	68%

28 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 reported holding full time positions.

Status of position	# of responses	% of responses
Full time	85	71%
Part time	35	29%

120 respondents answered this question.

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	% of responses
Weekly catechetical program	91	81%
Summer vacation bible school	46	41%
RCIA for children	37	33%
Family-centered program	34	30%
Intergenerational program	30	27%
Home schooling religious education	25	22%
Lectionary-based program	24	21%
Programs for children with special needs	12	11%
Mini-course program	11	10%
Catechesis of Good Shepherd	9	8%
Summer catechetical program	6	5%
Retreat models of religious education	5	5%

112 respondents answered this question.

Number of participants in catechetical programs

Respondents were asked for a count of the number of participants in their catechetical programs, by grade level. Not all respondents answered this question and those who did respond did not report participants at every grade level. The total number of participants is shown in the chart below; the number of responses for each grade level is also reported.

Grades	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Total # of participants	1,375	2,317	2,938	2,293	2,221	2,037	1,751	1,640	1,681
# of responses	94	104	106	106	104	105	96	94	91

Annual contact hours

When asked about the number of contact hours per year in each grade level, respondents reported an average of 28 annual contact hours for 1st through 8th grade catechetical programs. The responses ranged from 13 hours to 48 hours; the mode (the number of hours that occurred most frequently) was 30 hours. 115 respondents answered this question.

Kindergarten averaged 27 contact hours annually, with a range from 10 to 44 hours and a mode of 30 hours. 99 respondents answered this question.

Catechetical textbooks/series used

Respondents were asked what textbook or series they used for their 1-6 grade level catechesis, and were asked to choose from a list of ten textbooks/series or fill in the blank for "other." No consensus on books/series appeared in the responses. The largest number using any one series in the dropdown list was 17-20 (depending on the grade level) who used *Blest Are We*.⁴ Between 8 and 12 respondents said they were using *Call to Faith*.⁵ Between 9 and 13 respondents used *Faith First*.⁶ All other choices in the drop down categories or the "other" category were used by fewer than 10 respondents. A few respondents said they were using one of the titles in the drop down list with an earlier publication date. 108 respondents answered this question.

*Blest Are We*⁷ was also the first choice for 7th and 8th graders--with 11 respondents saying they used that text. 10 said they used *Catholic Connections Handbooks for Middle Schoolers*.⁸ No other text was used by 10 or more respondents. 91 respondents answered this question.

There was no consensus on texts or series used for kindergarten catechesis either. 11 respondents said they used *I am Special*⁹ and 10 said they used *We Believe*.¹⁰ Those two received the largest number of mentions. 90 respondents answered this question.

⁴ *Blest Are We*, Faith and Word Edition (1-6) RCL, Benzinger, 2008.

⁵ *Call to Faith* (K-6), Harcourt Religion Publishers, 205, 2009.

⁶ *Faith First* Legacy Edition/Parish (K-8), RCL Benzinger, 2006.

⁷ *Blest Are We* (7-8), Benzinger, 2003, 2010.

⁸ *Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers*, St. Mary's Press, 2009.

⁹ *I am Special* (3,4 and K), Our Sunday Visitor, 2007-2009.

¹⁰ *We Believe* (K-6), William Sadlier, Inc., 2004-2011.

Class times

Respondents were asked when they held classes and to check all that applied. The largest number held classes on Sunday morning (74%), followed by weekday evening (66%).

When classes are held	# of respondents	% of respondents
Sunday morning	84	74%
Weekday evening	75	66%
Sunday evening	15	13%
After school	12	12%
Saturday morning	10	9%

113 respondents answered this question.

Scheduling alternatives

When asked if they offered more than one scheduling option for a particular level, 45 percent said yes; 55 percent said no. 114 respondents answered this question.

Parent involvement

When asked how they involved parents in catechetical programs, most said through take home materials. "Other" opportunities offered for parents included parent/child sessions, service projects, retreats, prayer services, fund raising programs, learning session for parents of children receiving the sacraments.

Methods of parent involvement	# of responses	% of responses
Take-home materials	96	87%
Special programs for parents	67	61%
Intergenerational sessions	57	51%
Work with children in the classroom	51	46%

110 respondents answered this question.

Annual fees

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

	One child	Two children	Three children	Maximum
Lowest fee	0	0	0	0
Highest fee	\$175	\$320	\$480	\$480
Average fee	\$71	\$133	\$173	\$184
Median fee	\$75	\$120	\$150	\$155

113 respondents answered this question.

Assessments

Respondents were asked what assessments they use. A majority of respondents, 56 percent, said they use the Archdiocesan Religious Assessments. Most respondents who answered "other" said they used the assessments from their textbook/series.

Assessment	# of responses	% of responses
Archdiocesan Religious Assessments	54	56%
NCEA's ACRE	2	2%
None	42	44%
Other	25	26%

96 respondents answered this question.

Programs for children with special needs

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

Program	Special program (SPRED, Vine & Branches, ARISE, Risen)	Collaborate with another parish for special program	Mainstream children with extra assistance from catechists or aides	Handle each child individually as needed
# of responses	17	6	9	11

43 respondents answered this question.

Summer vacation bible school

53 respondents (44 percent) said they were having a summer vacation bible school this summer.

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	1	1	1
Largest class	212	212	18
Average	44	44	4
Total	4,655	4,585	144

106 respondents answered this question.

Sacramental preparation - programs included

Respondents were also asked what program elements were included in their Sacramental programs. Parent sessions received the largest number of mentions with 89 percent.

Sacramental programs	# of responses	% of responses
Parent sessions	94	89%
At home work	88	83%
Integration with religious ed or school classes	84	79%
Retreat day	68	64%
Special sessions for the children	51	48%

106 respondents answered this question.

Textbooks/series used for Sacramental preparation

Respondents were asked to indicate what textbooks/series they used for First Reconciliation, First Communion and RCIA for children. They were given 16 options on a drop-down menu or could choose "other."

In response to the question for First Reconciliation in Grade 2, 38 respondents chose "other," 13 said *God's Gift-Reconciliation*,¹¹ and 11 said *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace* (primary).¹² All other options on the drop-down list were used by fewer than 10 respondents. There was no consensus in the "other" responses--no more than two respondents indicated they used the same text/series. 95 respondents answered this question.

¹¹ *God's Gift-Reconciliation*, Loyola Press, 2009.

¹² *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace* (primary), RCL Benzinger, 2006.

When asked about textbooks/series for First Reconciliation for older children, there was even less consensus. Only one option from the drop-down list was used by more than 10 respondents: *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace* (intermediate)¹³ was used by 11 respondents. In the "other" responses, there was no consensus. Most reported combining a variety of materials. 95 respondents answered this question.

Similarly, when asked about textbooks/series for First Communion preparation for grade 2 (from a drop-down menu of 16 options), only two were used by 10 or more respondents: *Eucharist*¹⁴ was used by 11 and *God's Gift-Eucharist*¹⁵ was used by 13 respondents. Only one text was cited by 10 respondents for First Communion for older children: *Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise*¹⁶ (intermediate).

There was no consensus among the 29 respondents who reported what material they used for RCIA for children.

Sacramental preparation fee

Respondents were asked what fees they charge for sacramental preparation. One-third had no charge for First Communion preparation; one-half had no fee for First Reconciliation preparation. 12 respondents reporting having a combined fee for First Communion and First Reconciliation. 8 respondents reported having a fee for RCIA for children. The chart below reports on those who do charge fees for sacramental preparation.

	First Communion	First Reconciliation	Combined	RCIA for children
Lowest fee	\$0	\$0	\$25	\$20
Highest fee	\$50	\$80	\$65	\$70
Average fee	\$15	\$10	\$35	\$40
Median fee	\$15	\$0	\$35	\$37.50

106 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. Because the numbers do not tally accurately, they should not be taken as exact. They are, however, valuable in getting a general picture of catechists in the archdiocese.

Total number of catechists reported	1,873	
Number with certification	284 ¹⁷	15%
Number with 0-5 years of service	1,041	55%
Number with over 5 years of service	784	42%

107 respondents answered this question.

¹³ *Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace* (intermediate), RCL Benzinger, 2006.

¹⁴ *Eucharist*, RCL Benzinger, 2003.

¹⁵ *God's Gift-Eucharist*, Loyola Press, 2009.

¹⁶ *Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise* (intermediate), RCL Benzinger, 2006.

¹⁷ Several reported they did not know how many of their catechists were certified.

Catechists - formation

Respondents were asked what kind of formation they provide for their catechists. Individual orientation was most often mentioned (by 90 percent of the respondents). Over 50 percent said they used in-service training, sharing reading materials, catechist group sharing, speakers/adult education and funding for conferences/courses. The 12 respondents who mentioned "other" formation opportunities mostly said more formation was planned in the coming year.

Formation opportunities	# of responses	% of response
Individual orientation	90	90%
In-service training	80	75%
Sharing reading materials	76	71%
Catechist group sharing	76	71%
Speakers/adult education	59	55%
Funding to attend conferences/courses	59	55%
District catechist day	49	46%
Echoes of Faith	22	21%
Mentor program	14	13%
Forming the Catechetical Spirit program	8	8%

107 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.

Service	# of responses	% of responses
Substitute catechists	97	90%
Catechist aides	74	69%
Office assistants	65	60%
Craft and project assistants	58	54%
Hall monitors and greeters	50	46%
Presenters on special topics	47	43%
Special event team	42	39%
Assistants for children with special needs	38	35%
Set up/equipment assistants	27	25%

108 respondents answered this question.