

# **St. Charles Borromeo Parish Catholic Catechetical Plan**

## **A Parish Plan for the Formation of Disciples for Christ**

*"Our mission at St. Charles Borromeo is to provide a comprehensive program of life-long faith formation that fosters an ongoing Christ-centered apprenticeship in the Christian life and Catholic religion for each individual member of our parish community."*

St. Charles Borromeo Parish  
300 NH Route 25  
Meredith, NH 03253

Summer 2012

# St. Charles Borromeo Parish Catechetical Plan

## A Parish Plan for the Formation of Disciples for Christ

Recognizing that parishioners have different catechetical needs at different stages in their life's journey, we offer faith formation experiences that address the needs of all of our parishioners, from early childhood through old age, including those with disabilities. We are all sons or daughters; in addition many of us are a brother or a sister, many are parents, many are wives or husbands. The nature of our relationships with others evolves and changes throughout our lifespan, and the St. Charles Borromeo faith formation program is designed to address the unique needs of our parishioners.

### What is "Catechesis"?

#### *Catechesis promotes...*

- knowledge of the Christian faith and the Catholic religion
- knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments
- moral formation in Jesus Christ
- a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society

#### *Catechesis teaches...*

- how to pray with Christ

#### *Catechesis prepares...*

- the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the Catholic life and mission of the Church<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "These six tasks of catechesis constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus" (*National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) 20, p. 61-63; *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) 86-87)

The *Diocese of Manchester Catechetical Plan* (2010) presents six elements of catechetical ministry the Diocese of Manchester intends to foster. It can be found at: [www.catholicnh.org](http://www.catholicnh.org)

## Faith Formation Commission

The Faith Formation Commission is appointed to carry out the Catechetical Plan. Our purpose is to help St. Charles Borromeo parishioners meet Christ and follow the way of Christ.

### Beliefs of the Faith Formation Commission

- Ongoing conversion is essential to growth in faith.
- Faith formation is an essential part of the Christian life for people of all ages.
- Adult faith formation is the central task of the catechetical endeavor.
- The model for all catechesis is the *baptismal catechumenate*, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a process of preparation through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic Church.
- Catechesis (faith formation) is the responsibility of all parishioners.
- We must reach out and support the formation of competent catechists.

## Goals of the Faith Formation Commission

- ❖ *We will lead our parish in becoming a more hospitable and inclusive community, by...*
  - Publicizing opportunities for faith formation
  - Exploring ways to be more welcoming to those who are marginalized
  - Exploring ways to be more welcoming to those with disabilities
  - Assessing the needs of our parishioners on a regular basis
  
- ❖ *We will facilitate the continuing conversion of parishioners, by...*
  - Creating and/or expanding small faith sharing groups
  - Developing and promoting adult formation opportunities
  - Encouraging personal witness by all parishioners
  - Encouraging pastoral outreach ministry by all parishioners
  
- ❖ *We will link catechesis for children and youth with catechesis for adults, by...*
  - Seeking ways to be more family friendly in scheduling programs
  - Providing resources to support and affirm family life as the center of faith formation for children
  - Promoting opportunities for intergenerational faith formation
  - Providing encouragement and resources to parents as they prepare their children for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation

## St. Charles Borromeo Parish

### Groups and Programs for Catechesis

- Sacramental Preparation
  
- Faith formation for:
  - Early Childhood - Pre-First Communion
  - Children - grades K through 6
  - Adolescents
  - Adults
  
- Programs for Families
  
- Programs and Services for the Marginalized and those with Disabilities

*On the following pages, you will find detailed descriptions of these programs, including each program's strengths and areas of need, based on information obtained through a parish survey and input from focus groups.*

## Sacramental Preparation

### Baptism

Currently, the Baptism program prepares parents who are bringing their first child for Baptism, or have not participated in Baptism. It is offered as needed and provides catechesis on the sacrament of Baptism and the practical aspects of baptism.

### Reconciliation and First Communion Preparation

These programs provide catechesis on the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for children and their parents. A parent meeting with the Pastor and a family meeting with the Coordinator for each sacrament in addition to a formal preparation at home and religious education classes are required. First Reconciliation is celebrated annually in November. First Communion is celebrated annually in May during the Easter season.

### Confirmation

The Confirmation preparation program is a two-year process, which includes participation for two years, ordinarily 9th and 10th grades, in High School Religious Education sessions and participation during the second year in two interviews, monthly sessions, service requirements, written papers and a Confirmation retreat. A deanery 6-week preparation program for *adult candidates* for Confirmation is offered annually.

**Special Note: It is Diocesan Policy that all students who attend Catholic schools must participate in the immediate parish preparation programs for all sacraments as indicated above.**

### Marriage Preparation

Couples preparing for marriage are required to participate in an Engaged Encounter weekend OR a Toward Marriage followed by two to four couple-to-couple meetings with a committed married couple from the parish. These meetings are held in the home of the married couple. FOCCUS, an instrument/inventory, is used to facilitate discussion.

### RCIA

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) is a process of preparation through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic Church. Bi-monthly meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Candidates, catechumens and an RCIA team member are dismissed after the Sunday Liturgy of the Word to reflect on the scriptures.

### Commendations

- Excellent leaders, teachers and catechists
- Sacramental programs include an adult formation component and/or intergenerational catechesis
- Sacramental programs offer opportunities for parent/family participation.

- Sacramental programs and Children's Initiation provide resources and support to parents/families

### **Recommendations**

- Provide follow up or support groups for those who have completed sacramental programs or initiation processes
- Ensure more parental involvement in Reconciliation and Eucharist preparation.
- Further develop the Children's Initiation process

## Early Childhood - Pre-First Communion

### Current Practices:

- Baptism Preparation

### Commendations

- Protection of children is of the highest priority
- Great space to provide programs and quiet places for young children to learn church behavior
- Diaper changing stations in bathrooms
- Day care provided during Faith Formation meetings for parents

### Recommendations:

- Create a children's bulletin to include a simplified message from the homily
- Open the chapel for parents with small children
- Provide separate catechetical sessions for children ages 3-6, to be held in the Parish Hall
- Provide parents with a packet of prayers to use with young children
- Publicly welcome children to create a kid-friendly environment
- Provide activities for parents with young children



## Children of Catechetical Age: Grades K through 6

### Catholic School:

Our Catholic schools are a vital part of the teaching mission of the Church and Catholic elementary and secondary schools as one of our church's primary missions. St. Charles Parish (as all parishes in the Diocese of Manchester) support and encourage parents to offer their children the great gift of a Catholic School education. The Catholic community is encouraged at every level to support the work of our Catholic elementary and secondary schools, keeping them available and accessible to as many parents as possible.

#### Holy Trinity School Grades K-8

50 Church Street

Laconia, NH 03246

(603) 524-3156

[www.holytrinity.pvt.k12.nh.us](http://www.holytrinity.pvt.k12.nh.us)

### Parish Program

#### Current Practices:

- Sacramental preparation for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation
- St. Charles Borromeo Religious Education classes for public school children and youth are held weekly throughout the school year

#### Commendations:

- Dedicated, faith-filled teachers, assistants, and monitors
- Good textbooks and resources
- Some intergenerational catechesis is offered
- Parents provide snacks for children
- All absences are verified by parish staff
- All teachers and assistants have completed the diocesan Safe Children's Program
- Parents attend special sessions for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Programs
- Attendance is strong, especially in kindergarten through grade 5

#### Recommendations:

- Provide comprehensive Catholic education and formation for catechists
- Ensure a regular review of Faith Formation times and places with parents
- Become more family friendly
- Ensure the program is continued when a teacher is absent, through use of a team teaching or teacher/assistant model
- As an extension to classes, include a parent/child component in the children's program

- Emphasize conversion and stewardship over a classroom model of learning information
- Increase opportunities for parent/family participation
- Explore intergenerational programs to meet the ongoing faith formation needs of all parishioners
- Explore ways children can be taught to participate at Mass
- Establish a Vacation Bible School
- Encourage children to participate in church ministries and activities
- Provide a children's bulletin

## Adolescents

### Catholic School:

Our Catholic schools are a vital part of the teaching mission of the Church and Catholic elementary and secondary schools as one of our church's primary missions. St. Charles Parish (as all parishes in the Diocese of Manchester) support and encourage parents to offer their children the great gift of a Catholic School education. The Catholic community is encouraged at every level to support the work of our Catholic elementary and secondary schools, keeping them available and accessible to as many parents as possible.

### Bishop Brady High School Grades 9-12

25 Columbus Ave.

Concord, NH 03301

(603) 224-7418

[www.bishopbrady.edu](http://www.bishopbrady.edu)

### Parish Program

#### Current Practices:

- Grades 7 and 8 are offered in both a summer and school year program. The summer program meets for one week; the school year program meets twice a month on Sundays, from September through April
- Confirmation preparation is offered in both a summer and school year program for grades 9 and 10. Summer Confirmation meets for one week; the school year program meets twice a month following Saturday Mass. As part of the confirmation preparation program, young people serve in liturgical ministry at Mass following the school year schedule for classes.
- Youth ministry meets monthly on Sunday evenings. Presently the focus is on Christian social fellowship, faith sharing, and service opportunities.

#### Commendations:

- Committed, faith filled leaders, youth ministry assistants, and catechists
- Good textbooks and resources
- Excellent parish retreat and youth conference experiences for youth
- There is a Youth Ministry Coordinator
- Parents participate in service, spiritual and fellowship activities
- Parents contribute time and food to Confirmation and Youth Ministry programs
- Summer Confirmation program is extremely strong and attractive to families and young people
- Parents enjoy attending faith formation sessions with their young people.
- Young people participate in faith sharing activities
- Young people engage in service projects both in the parish and greater community

- Emphasis is on discipleship and lifelong faith formation
- Young people enjoy pastor's question and answer sessions and topic presentations

**Recommendations:**

- Provide training for catechists in Catholic content and faith experience
- Include more Catholic content and faith experience for adolescents in the youth ministry program
- Provide Faith Formation to grades 11 and 12 as indicated by the Conference of Bishops
- Add a *mystagogy* (on-going formation follow-up) for young people receiving the sacrament of Confirmation
- Encourage parents and young people to serve in service ministries together in the parish community
- Increase opportunities for parents and young people to grow in faith
- Explore a better use of an Internet youth ministry web link with an active site and Facebook
- Become more involved in community-based programs

## Young Adults and Adults

### Current Practices:

- Sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Eucharist, First Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Marriage
- RCIA process
- Bible Study group meets on a regular basis
- Adult Faith Sharing Group on Mondays
- Opportunities for service at area food bank, meals for the needy, St. Vincent de Paul
- Community faith formation through Mary's Way of the Cross, Stations in Lent, Rosary, weekly Adoration, Crowning of Mary, Pastor Speaker at Women's Group, parish retreats.

### Commendations:

- Adult formation opportunities
- A good comprehensive RCIA process is in place
- Catechist formation process is well developed and systematic.

### Recommendations:

- Continue contact with parents after Baptism by providing information on Christian Parenting.
- Continue contact with newly married couples after the wedding.
- Establish a follow-up procedure or support group for those who have completed sacramental preparation.
- Offer flexibility and availability of start times for those who wish to participate in the RCIA process.
- Offer other times for faith formation, for example, Sunday mornings between or after masses.
- Increase young adult formation opportunities. These may include:
  - Building community and getting to know other parishioners through social events
  - Weekend retreats
  - Q&A sessions with the Pastor
  - Lectures with outside speakers
  - Parish library to include books as well as other media
  - Materials for private devotions, especially during advent and Lenten seasons.
  - Prayer
  - Programs to better prepare parishioners to respond to questions regarding their faith.
  - Christian parenting resources
  - Form a young adult ministry (19-29 years of age)

## Families

### Current Practices:

- A small library of children's books on a variety of religious topics is available to parents
- Junior and High school students attend faith formation workshops with their parents
- Family social events are offered within the parish, such as movies, dances and meals

### Commendations:

- Presently making strides in partnering with parents in faith formation

### Recommendations:

- Increase family involvement
- Encourage family service
- Offer child care for adult formation opportunities
- Create faith formation options designed to be accomplished primarily in the home as a family unit, with occasional regularly scheduled gatherings of the families participating

## Welcoming the Disabled and Marginalized

### Current Practices:

- RCIA is offered
- Two wheelchairs are available for use by parishioners and guests
- A sound system is available that amplifies the audio information from the microphones into individual receiver units
- Large print versions of printed material can be obtained upon request
- A text version of the online bulletin is currently available
- Ushers/greeters are available at the front doors for all Masses and other gatherings upstairs, to assist people as needed and to make all feel welcome

### Commendations:

- The church building is handicapped-accessible
- Outreach ministry is available to hospitals, nursing homes, sick, and shut-ins
- A Prayer Shawl Ministry is available
- One-on-one tutoring is available for religious education students with disabilities

### Recommendations:

- Welcome those with disabilities, those in poverty, immigrants, and non-Catholics
- Establish an Evangelization Committee to study available programs
- Post a notice in the bulletin regarding the availability of wheelchairs and sound amplification systems
- Provide large print versions of all printed materials and post availability
- In the library, provide a variety of published materials on dealing with chronic illnesses and disabilities

## **The Importance of Communicating**

**We communicate with our parishioners about faith formation opportunities by means of:**

- Personal invitation
- Weekly parish bulletin - available online and paper copies at Masses
- Bulletin inserts
- Parish website
- Pamphlet racks
- Adult Faith Formation Library (in progress)
- Time and Talent survey
- Information/invitation from the pulpit
- Announcements at Mass
- Parable Magazine available to all registered parishioners
- Calendar and events are posted weekly and on the website

**Suggestions for improving how we communicate about faith formation opportunities:**

- Publish a newsletter: *Voice of St. Charles Borromeo*
- Provide more bulletin inserts that describe formation opportunities on Sundays
- Representatives of the highlighted formation opportunities could be available after Mass at a table in the narthex, to answer questions, offer more information, and/or facilitate registration
- Offer a two to three minute talk about an upcoming faith formation opportunity before or after Mass
- As an upcoming faith formation opportunity is announced, informational flyers would be available in the pews



- Each member of the committee sponsoring a particular faith formation opportunity would extend a personal invitation to at least five members of the designated parish group
- Invite parishioners to participate in a faith formation opportunity via bulletin announcements and announcements at Mass
- Invite members of a targeted group (young adults, new parents, etc.) via phone calls, email, a mailing or some other type of personal invitation
- Distribute announcements and/or flyers publicizing current upcoming faith formation opportunities at each parish committee meeting during the month
- Find additional effective ways to use the parish website to communicate about faith formation opportunities
- Pastor's Notes on the website could include information about and invitation to upcoming faith formation opportunities
- Utilize local newspapers as a means of getting information to both parishioners and non-parishioners
- Explore the use of Facebook as a means of communicating with younger parishioners
- Establish an information board in the narthex detailing upcoming faith formation programs