

St. Anthony Parish Catechetical Plan

**St. Anthony Parish
1870 St. Ambrose St.
Dubuque, IA 52001**

**Developed September 2002
Updated July 2006**

St. Anthony Parish Catechetical Plan components and annual procedures include:

1. Faith formation vision statement, goals and objectives

Annually goals and actions will be evaluated at the April Board meeting.

Annually at the April meeting the St. Anthony Board of Education and Faith Formation will select two or three goals and objectives on which to focus for the coming year.

Specific actions for each selected goal will be developed for review at the June meeting and approval at the August board meeting.

2. St. Anthony Parish Catechesis diagram

This diagram shows (1) the relationship of each of the St. Anthony faith formation programs & processes to the Board and (2) the division of parish faith formation programs & processes according to the eight areas of catechesis.

3. Description of the present practice, strengths and weaknesses for each of the eight areas of catechesis

This description of present practice, strengths and weaknesses will be updated by a committee of board members and the DRE annually and submitted for approval by the board annually at the May meeting.

4. Description of current practice and suggestions for methods of communication of parish faith formation opportunities

This description of present practice and suggestions for methods of communication of faith formation opportunities will be updated by a committee of board members and the DRE annually and submitted for approval by the board at the May meeting.

ST. ANTHONY PARISH CATECHETICAL PLAN

Mission

The St. Anthony Board of Education and Faith Formation endeavors to provide an ongoing, Christ centered apprenticeship in the Christian life for all parishioners through the development of a program of total parish catechesis (faith formation). Our mission is carried out in the following areas:

Early Childhood
Children
Adolescents
Young Adults
Adults
People With Special Needs
Families
Parish School

Philosophy

- We believe the essential purpose of the St. Anthony Board of Education & Faith Formation is to help St. Anthony parishioners meet Christ and follow the way of Christ.
- We believe ongoing conversion is essential to growth in faith.
- We believe faith formation is an essential part of the Christian life for people of all ages.
- We believe adult faith formation is the central task of the catechetical endeavor.
- We believe the model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate*.
- We believe catechesis (faith formation) is the responsibility of all parishioners.

Vision and Goals

Inspired by the baptismal catechumenate, we will facilitate others to Christ as we:

- A. Lead the parish in becoming a more hospitable, inclusive community.
 1. We will market existing faith formation opportunities.
 2. We will explore ways to become a more welcoming community, especially to those who are marginalized for any reason.
 3. We will conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of parishioners.
- B. Encourage and facilitate the continuing conversion of all parishioners.
 1. We will create/expand small faith sharing groups, especially for those in transition.
 2. We will develop/promote adult formation opportunities.
 3. We will encourage personal witness by all parishioners.
 4. We will encourage pastoral outreach ministry by all parishioners.
- C. Link catechesis for children and youth with catechesis for adults.
 1. We will provide resources to support and affirm family life as the center of faith formation for children.

2. We will explore and promote intergenerational faith formation opportunities.
3. We will provide encouragement and resources to parents as they prepare their children for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

*The baptismal catechumenate is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a process of preparation through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

**St. Anthony Parish
TOTAL PARISH CATECHESIS**

Sacramental Prog. -Baptism I -Reconciliation -Eucharist -Confirmation -Marriage Prep.	Holy Family Catholic Schools	H.S. Religious Education Youth Ministry Wahlert H.S.
SCHOOL		
Baptism II/ Christian Parenting		Confirmation Prog. Children's Initiation
St. Anthony RE		YOUTH
St. Anthony School Children's Initiation	FAMILY	K-8 Religious Education Sacramental Prog. -Reconciliation -Eucharist
Little Christian Preschool	EARLY CHILDHOOD	CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE
St. Anthony Preschool	Education and Faith Formation Committee	St. Anthony School Children's Initiation Children's Liturgy of the Word
	PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	ADULT
St. Anthony School Little Christian Preschool St. Anthony R.E.	YOUNG ADULT	Sacramental Programs -Baptism I -Reconciliation -Eucharist -Confirmation -Marriage Preparation

Sacramental Programs		
-Baptism I		Bible Studies
-Reconciliation		
-Eucharist		Sm. Faith Communities
-Confirmation	Baptism I	RCIA
-Marriage Prep.		
Youth Ministry	Baptism II/ Christian Parenting	Catechist Formation
Baptism II	Marriage Preparation	Advent/Lent Offerings
Bible Study	Bible Study	Emmaus Weekends
Sm. Faith Communities	Sm. Faith Communities	Parish Library
RCIA	RCIA	Alpha
Children's Initiation	Alpha	Baptism II/ Chrisitan Parenting

ST. ANTHONY FAITH FORMATION

Description of Current Practices, Strengths, Weaknesses, Communication Methods

Because sacramental preparation and initiation processes are included in many of the eight areas of catechesis, sacramental programs and initiation processes for adults and children are described below and then listed by name in the appropriate areas of catechesis.

Sacramental Preparation

Baptism I

The Baptism I program is for parents who are (1) bringing their first child for Baptism or (2) have not participated in Baptism I. This two hour session is offered quarterly 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 and a family meeting for each sacrament plus preparation at home and through school or religious education classes are required. First Reconciliation services are offered on two dates in January. First Communion may be celebrated in a group or individually during the Easter season.

Confirmation

The Confirmation program is a two-year process, which includes (1) participation for two years, ordinarily 9th and 10th grades, in H.S. Religious Education sessions or attendance at religion classes at Wahlert H.S. and (2) participation during the second year in two interviews, monthly sessions, service requirements, written papers and a Confirmation retreat.

A city-wide 6 week preparation program for adult candidates for Confirmation is offered annually at St. Anthony during the Lenten season.

Marriage Preparation

Couples preparing for marriage are required to participate in a diocesan Engaged Encounter OR Pre-Cana session 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.

Christian Initiation

RCIA

The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) is a process of preparation through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic church. Weekly meetings begin in September and end sometime during the Easter season. Additionally, candidates, catechumens and RCIA team members are dismissed after the Sunday Liturgy of the Word to reflect on the scriptures.

Children's Initiation

Children's Initiation is the RCIA process adapted for children of catechetical age (age of reason) who are unbaptized or who have had minimal formal faith formation. This process, through which children are fully initiated into the Catholic church, includes prayer, rituals, community activities and support, reflection on the scriptures and teachings of the church and service to others. Strong emphasis is placed on the family's growth in faith along with the child.

Strengths (Sacramental Preparation & Christian Initiation):

1. Excellent leaders, teachers and catechists.
2. Sacramental programs include an adult formation component and/or intergenerational catechesis.
3. Sacramental programs offer opportunities for parent/family participation.
4. Sacramental programs & Children's Initiation provide resources and support to parents/families.

Weaknesses (Sacramental Preparation & Christian Initiation):

1. No follow up or support groups of those who have completed sacramental programs or initiation processes.
2. Main focus of Reconciliation and Eucharist preparation is on formation of children in a classroom setting by teachers and catechists. More parental involvement is needed.
3. Marriage preparation often focuses on weaknesses, not strengths.
4. Further development of the Children's Initiation process is needed.

EIGHT AREAS OF CATECHESIS

Early Childhood

Current Practices:

1. St. Anthony School offers preschool programs for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Religion is integrated into the curriculum.
2. Little Christian Preschool for 3,4, and 5 year olds is offered every Sunday during the 9:15 AM mass during the school year.
3. Children's Liturgy of the Word for children age 5 through grade 3 is offered during the 9:15 Sunday Mass. Following the Gathering Rite children leave the main assembly to celebrate their

own Liturgy of the Word presented at their level of understanding. They rejoin the main assembly for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Strengths:

1. Qualified, competent leaders, teachers and catechists.
2. Early sense of parish as a community is developed.
3. Children's level of understanding/development is respected.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited awareness of these programs.

Children of Catechetical Age

Current Practices:

1. Sacramental preparation for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation.
2. Children's Initiation
3. St. Anthony School: Religion class is taught one half hour per day and is integrated throughout the curriculum.
4. St. Anthony Religious Education (R.E.) classes for public school children and youth are held from 6:30 - 7:45 on Wednesday evenings throughout the school year.

Strengths:

1. Dedicated, faith filled catechists and teachers.
2. Good textbooks and resources.
3. Good formation for catechists.
4. Opportunities for parent/family participation are offered.
5. Some intergenerational catechesis is offered.

Weaknesses:

1. Children's Initiation is not fully developed or publicized.
2. Time constraints (Wednesday evening R.E.).
3. Frequent turnover of catechists (Wednesday evening R.E.).
4. Classroom model of faith formation does not strongly support faith formation in the home.
5. Classroom model of faith formation emphasizes the teaching and learning of information rather than conversion and apprenticeship in a way of life.
6. Shared space presents challenges, particularly for the Wednesday evening R.E. program.

Adolescents

Current Practices:

1. Sacramental preparation for Confirmation.
2. Christian Initiation
3. Wahlert H.S.: Religion class is taught daily for 9th & 10th grades and every other day for 11th and 12th grades.
4. St. Anthony H.S. Religious Education classes for 9th and 10th grades are held from 6:30 - 7:45 PM on Wednesday evenings throughout the school year.
5. A high school youth group meets bi-monthly and offers Christian fellowship, faith sharing and service opportunities.
6. Opportunities exist to attend weekend retreats and national youth conferences.

Strengths:

1. Committed, faith filled leaders, teachers and catechists.
2. Strong Campus Ministry program at Wahlert H.S.
3. Good textbooks and resources.
4. Good formation for catechists.
5. Excellent parish retreat experience for youth.
6. Full-time Youth Formation Coordinator

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of catechesis component in youth ministry program.
2. Lack of availability of H.S. religious education for 11th and 12th graders.
3. No mystagogy (follow up) for youth after Confirmation.

Young Adults and Adults

Current Practices:

1. Sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Eucharist, First Reconciliation, Confirmation and Marriage.
2. RCIA
3. Children's Initiation
4. Baptism II/Christian Parenting: This program consists of one 3 hour session offered quarterly for parents who have completed Baptism I and are anticipating the baptism of a second child. The focus of Baptism II/Christian Parenting is Christian parenting.
5. Bible Study: A series of 5 - 7 two hour sessions are offered twice yearly in the fall and spring.
6. Faith Sharing Groups: There are 15 -17 existing groups whose meeting times and topics vary. A men's group meets on the first and third Saturday at 7:00 AM and is open to new members. A faith formation and fellowship group meets on the first and third Friday evenings of each month during the school year. All are welcome.
7. Catechist Formation: Ongoing training for catechists includes formation in the areas of scripture, theology, catechetical methods and personal and spiritual formation. Five - seven sessions are offered each year.
8. Emmaus Weekends: This spiritual growth and faith fellowship retreat weekend is offered once each year for men and once for women.
9. Opportunities for service and formation related to Catholic social teaching are available through the Social Concerns Committee (ex: Haiti committee, Right to Life committee).
10. Area opportunities: Adults and young adults are encouraged to attend area faith formation and spiritual growth opportunities which are publicized through weekly bulletin announcements.

Strengths:

1. Wide variety of adult formation opportunities offered through local retreat facilities, colleges and parishes.
2. Catechist formation process is well developed and systematic.
3. Catechists and group leaders are faith filled, dedicated and enthusiastic.
4. Faith sharing groups offer community as well as formation thus strengthening the larger parish community.
5. Full-time Adult Faith Formation Director.
6. Active Small Christian Community Core Group

Weaknesses:

1. No faith sharing, social, or service groups targeted for the young adult population.
2. No follow up or support groups for those who have completed sacramental preparation, Emmaus Weekends and other formation programs.

3. Lack of flexibility and availability of start time for those who wish to participate in the RCIA process.
4. Awareness of adult and young adult formation opportunities is limited.
5. Many existing faith sharing groups are unable or unwilling to take new members.
6. Weak connecting of parents to community parenting resources.
7. Lack of appropriate meeting spaces.

People With Special Needs

Current Practices:

1. People with special needs are mainstreamed into all parish formation opportunities.
2. Aides and/or aids for people with special needs are made available when needed.
3. One to one catechesis is made available when needed.

Strengths:

1. The community is enriched by the presence of people with special needs in all activities and circumstances.
2. A signing mass for the hearing impaired is offered each third Sunday at the 11:00 mass.
3. Church building is handicap accessible.
4. Active Special Needs committee.

Weaknesses

1. People with special needs are not actively recruited to participate in formation.
2. Lack of training for leaders in strategies for use with people with special needs.
3. Most meeting spaces in the Stemm and Steinmetz buildings are not handicap accessible.

Families

Current Practices:

1. Sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage.
2. RCIA
3. Children's Initiation
4. Baptism II/Christian Parenting (see Adult/Young Adult section for description)
5. Some family liturgical opportunities exist through the school and Wednesday evening R.E. programs.
6. Some intergenerational formation opportunities (family evenings) are offered through the Wednesday evening R.E. program.
7. Some formation for families is included in the school and Wednesday evening newsletters.

Strengths:

1. Family involvement is a component of sacramental preparation.
2. Parents are supportive of school and R.E. programs.

Weaknesses:

1. Family service opportunities are lacking and not well publicized.
2. Participation in life-long faith formation is not often modeled by adults.
3. Child care not offered for most adult formation opportunities.
4. Lack of creative resources for families which support the family as the "Church of the Home". Most family formation requires families to come to the parish.

5. Lack of appropriate meeting spaces.

Parish Schools

Current Practices:

1. St. Anthony School: Religion class is taught one half hour per day.
2. Wahlert H.S.: Religion class is taught daily for 9th & 10th grades and every other day for 11th and 12th grades.

Strengths:

1. Quality of faculty.
2. Integration of Catholic dimension into all classes and activities.
3. The connection with the parish is encouraged by supporting and communicating with parish shut-ins.
4. Masses for children, faculty and parents are held weekly.

Weaknesses:

1. More family intergenerational faith formation opportunities are needed.

Communication Methods Current Practices and Suggestions

Faith formation opportunities are communicated in the following ways:

Personal invitation
Information/invitation from the pulpit
Parish bulletin (weekly)
Voice of St. Anthony newsletter (quarterly)
School newsletter (weekly)
R. E. newsletter (monthly)
Bulletin inserts
Time and Talent survey (annually)

Suggestions for communication of faith formation opportunities:

Bulletin insert describing one or more formation opportunities offered on various Sundays. Representatives of the highlighted formation opportunities are available after mass at a table in the gathering space to answer questions, offer further information and/or facilitate registration

A 2 - 3 minute talk is offered before or after mass about an upcoming formation opportunity.

As an upcoming faith formation opportunity is announced, informational flyers are available in the pews.

Five or more personal invitations are extended by each member of the sponsoring committee or each member of a targeted parish group.

Invite all parishioners to participate in a formation opportunity via bulletin announcements and announcements at mass. In addition, invite members of a targeted group (young adults, new parents, seniors etc.) via phone calls, a mailing or some other kind of personal invitation.

Announcements and/or flyers publicizing a formation opportunity are given at each parish committee meeting during a given month.

Parish web site