

Sample Position Description

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A Vision of this Ministry

Directors of Religious Education are parish ministers who have acquired specialized training in religious studies, theology and related areas. They provide leadership in the design and implementation of programs for adults, youth and children to assist in building a solid foundation for adult spirituality, Christian living and ministry. DRE's empower parishioners to respond more fully to their baptismal call to word, worship and service mainly through reflection upon life experiences in the light of Jesus' Gospel and message.

Responsibilities and Tasks

Ministry of Administration

The Director of Religious Education:

1. Collaborates with the pastor, under his supervision, and with other members of the parish staff integrating his or her own area of responsibility with the overall parish endeavor.
2. Develops a coordinated approach toward total parish religious education (i.e., faith development through catechesis on all age levels), and collaborates with the catechetical staff in formulating a statement of catechetical purpose.
3. Researches the religious education needs and preferences of the people of the parish, designs catechetical programs to meet those needs, with particular emphasis upon adults, in accord with the principles enunciated in Church documents and Archdiocesan policies. He or she chooses suitable materials for these programs.
4. Oversees the recruitment of catechists and support staff, and provides them with continuity and support.
5. Directs the work of the religious education professional and support staff.
6. Where there is a policy-making board for religious education, acts as its executive officer administering the policies established by this board.
7. Undertakes ongoing evaluation in the light of goals and objectives based on the catechetical statement of purpose.
8. Prepares and manages the religious education budget in collaboration with the pastor.
9. Ensures that accurate records are kept of catechists, children, families, etc.
10. Serves as a communication link between the catechetical program and the rest of the parish, including the catechetical staff, parents and the parish at large.
11. Provides catechetical consultation to the other members of the parish staff.

Ministry of Worship

The Director of Religious Education:

1. Ensures that opportunities are available for liturgical worship services in all religious education programs.
2. Collaborates with the Coordinator of Liturgy and/or Director of Music Ministry to assure that liturgical worship is integrated with catechetical programs.

Ministry of Education

The Director of Religious Education:

1. Invites, motivates and trains volunteers to assist as responsible leaders for various aspects of the total program.
2. Develops a learning community among the catechists so that they assimilate the basic principles of pedagogy and androgogy, and are able to apply this knowledge for the particular grade/age level.
3. Facilitates personal faith growth among catechists as a Christian community.
4. Presents to catechists and others, the teaching of the Catholic Church according to the catechetical principles enunciated in Church documents: universal, national and Archdiocesan.
5. Provides opportunities for parents to exercise their role as primary catechists by taking an active part in the religious education of their children.

Ministry of Pastoral Services

The Director of Religious Education:

1. Calls forth personnel from among the members of the parish to assist as responsible leaders for various aspects of the program.
2. Is visibly present at principal parish events.
3. Promotes good public relations both within and beyond the parish, and is involved in ecumenical, cluster, Deanery and Archdiocesan networks of professional peers.

Qualities

While DRE's possess many qualities common to all pastoral ministers, a few are particularly important. The capacity to relate to a wide variety of people, a spirit of generosity, and the ability to delegate and collaborate are essential because the ministry of the DRE often intersects with other parish ministries. Flexibility, realism, enthusiasm and a sense of humor are also important qualities for the DRE.

Competencies and Skills

In addition to the competencies and skills needed by all pastoral ministers, there are several which a DRE needs in particular. He or she:

1. Is able to articulate the philosophy and theology underlying the parish religious education program.
2. Can guide and write the statement of catechetical purpose, the goals and objectives of this statement, and provide the programs to implement these.
3. Is able to guide the catechetical staff in the systematic assessment of the catechetical needs of the parish.
4. Is able to understand catechetical methodology, adult faith formation, and the standards and policies of the Archdiocese for religious education.

5. Is able to articulate Catholic theology in light of the teachings of the Church since the Second Vatican Council.
6. Can incorporate appropriate content from Catholic scholarship into catechists' training and other adult religious education programming.
7. Is able to formally evaluate the catechetical programs.
8. Can integrate the catechetical thrust of the parish with liturgical celebration.
9. Is able to assemble literary and audio-visual resources.

Formation, Training and Criteria for Readiness

In addition to the training for all pastoral ministers, the Director of Religious Education should also possess the following:

Educational Preparation

The DRE is to have a Master's Degree in religious education, theology, scripture or liturgical studies with course work in the same areas. Studies toward this degree preferably include course work in "theology, scripture, liturgy, psychology, educational theory" (National Catechetical Directory, #214).

Catechetical Preparation

To function effectively, the DRE needs experience in catechizing or teaching religion. A minimum of four years catechetical experience is recommended, i.e., experience as a religion teacher in an elementary or secondary school, or as a catechist in a parish religious education program. Experience on a variety of levels, including child catechesis in particular, is preferred.

Administrative Experience

To function effectively, the DRE needs administrative experience, ideally in the direction of some phase of parish catechetics or in some other administrative capacity which involves the direction of programs and personnel. At least two years administrative experience is recommended.