

# HOME SCHOOLING POLICY

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Mindful of parents' privilege as the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith, (GDC #255) we also recognize that the sacraments are properly to be celebrated within the context of the parish community. (GDC #257) The rights and responsibilities of parents and parishes alike in this endeavor call for a true partnership between the two.

Whether their children attend a parish religious education program, a Catholic school, or are instructed at home, parents are required to participate actively in preparing their children to receive the sacraments, especially Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation. This includes participation in the parish sacramental preparation programs and sacramental celebrations.

In light of the entire process for catechesis to include the four components of knowledge, community, service and worship, home schooling alone cannot replace catechesis or sacramental preparation in the parish church. (NDC #61(A) (3), p.259f; CT #202-26) The parish must continue to be the prime mover and preeminent place for catechesis. (CT #67)

“By virtue of his office, the parish priest is bound to ensure the catechetical formation of adults, young people and children.” (Canon Law #776) “In a special way the parish priest is to ensure, in accordance with the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop that: an adequate catechesis is given for the celebration of the sacraments; children are properly prepared for first confession and first holy communion, and for the sacrament of confirmation, by means of catechetical formation over an appropriate period of time; children after they have made their first holy communion, are given a richer and deeper catechetical formation.” (Canon Law #777.1.2.3)

When parents decide to be responsible for the total religious education of their child(ren), they will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Parents will register in their parish and declare their option for home schooling.
- 2) Materials must be on the approved list provided by the [USCCB](#). The preferred text will be the one used in the parish religious education program or the parish elementary school program. The pastor or parish life coordinator will approve the home program and text(s).
- 3) The home schoolers will follow the Religion Curriculum Guidelines for the Diocese of Phoenix.

- 4) The pastor, or his designate will meet periodically with the home schoolers to review the progress of the program.
- 5) Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation will be celebrated in the family's parish of registration.

## **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

The Division of Education and Evangelization, which includes the Catholic Schools Office and Department of Family Catechesis, acknowledges the right of parents as the primary educators of their children. "Under the supervision of legitimate ecclesiastical authority this concern for catechesis pertains to all the members of the Church in proportion to one's role. Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and Christian life by word and example." (Canon Law #774.1 & .2) Parents who choose to do home schooling are exercising that right. While the mission of the Catholic Schools Office is to support administrators in maintaining quality Catholic schools, it recognizes home schooling as a parent's choice for their children's education. This recognition does not imply support services to parents in their implementation of home schooling.

Parents choosing to home school their child/ren must complete the Home School Affidavit of Intent and send it to the County Superintendent of Schools, along with a copy of the birth certificate.

A clearly defined policy should be in place at each local Catholic school to govern the acceptance of home schooled children.

A diploma from a school indicates regular attendance at that school and successful completion of the accepted curriculum of the school. It is not properly issued to a home schooled student.

## **IN SUMMARY**

Whether in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs or home schooling, it is essential that Catholic education foster strong Catholic identity, love for personal and communal prayer, regular Mass attendance and service to others.