

HOME SCHOOL

The documents of the Church frequently speak of the central role of parents in the catechesis and religious formation of their children. Today, parents are increasingly taking an active role in the education of their children, sometimes by organizing the formal education of their children in the home, including religious instruction (Home-school). The Church clearly recognizes the right of parents as the primary educators of their children.

1. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to see to the religious instruction and formation of all the children of the parish. Parents who decide to home-school their children, either for all subject areas, or religious formation alone, are expected to contact their Pastor, or his delegate, to indicate their intentions. Parents should review their program of instruction with their Pastor. The parish should make available to the parents the materials and resources it uses for catechesis. Parents may elect to use these or other diocesan approved religion texts, or other suitable materials that authentically communicate the Catholic faith. Questions about catechetical materials used by parents in their teaching at home, that cannot be resolved by the Pastor, may be referred to the Secretariat for Education.
2. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to "ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception" (c. 843). Children may receive instruction for the sacraments (Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation) in either the Catholic school, the parish religious education program, or from their parents in the home-school setting. The Pastor may determine other elements of formation for the sacraments, distinct from classroom instruction. The formation program for particular sacraments must be in accord with diocesan policy, and may include such things as: special programs for youth, retreats and Christian service requirements. All members of the parish, including children in the home-school setting, are expected to meet the requirements of the formational programs for sacramental preparation. All parents should attend the appropriate sacramental preparation meetings scheduled in the parish for adult formation and information. The evaluation of readiness for sacramental participation of children in the home-school setting may not be different from that of children attending other forms of religious instruction.

Approved:
December 1, 2003

+ Nicholas C. Dattilo
Bishop of Harrisburg