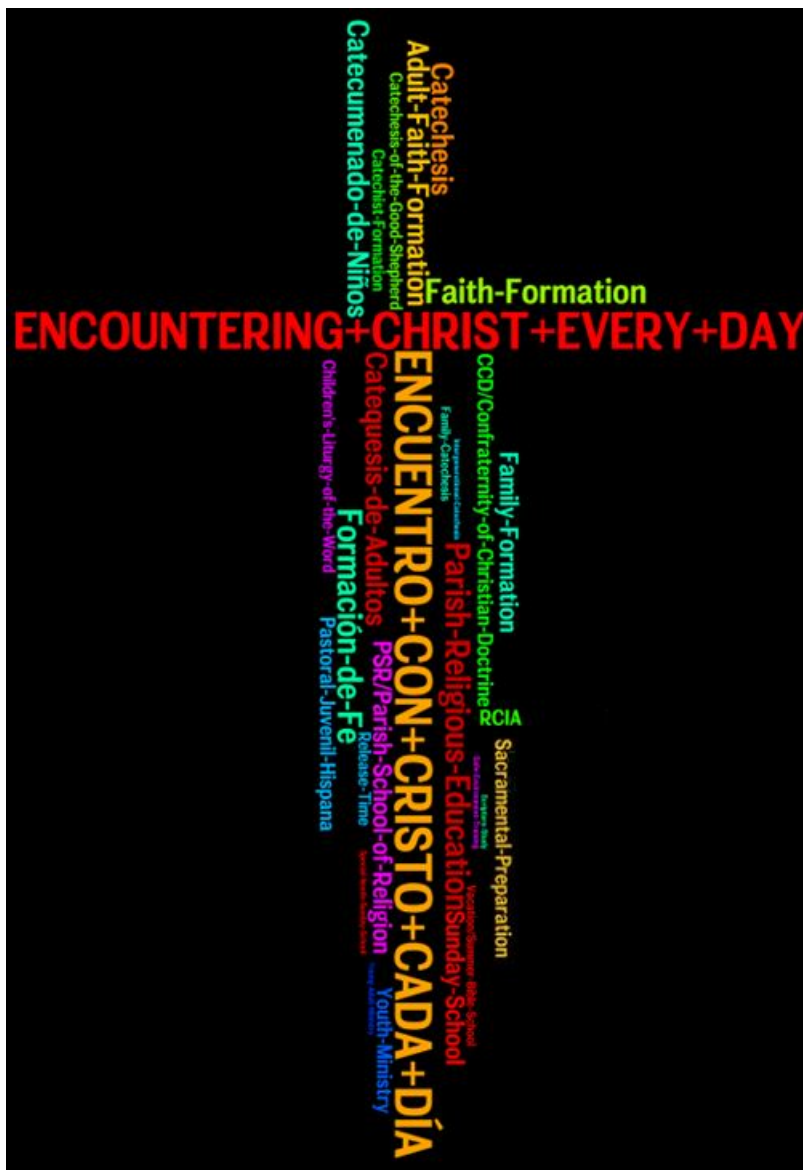


# Parish Religious Education Week

November 3-9, 2013



Celebration Guide for the Inaugural Year



National Catholic Educational Association  
Religious Education Department



**National Catholic Educational Association**  
Religious Education Department

1005 N. Glebe Road  
Suite 525  
Arlington, VA 22201  
800.711.6232  
[www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org)  
[reled@ncea.org](mailto:reled@ncea.org)

### **Copyright © 2013**

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) owns all rights, including but not limited to the copyright, in this celebration guide and all portions of it, including the logos and clip art ("promotional material"). NCEA grants permission to use, duplicate and/or distribute the promotional material in any media only to Catholic parishes, (arch)dioceses and organizations owned and controlled by Roman Catholic entities. These organizations may use the promotional material only as follows: (1) The material must be used to further the goals of the Catholic parish religious education promotion. (2) The use by a Catholic parish or diocese must be within the geographical boundaries of the diocese or parish community. (3) The logo and other artwork must be used in their entirety without changes or deletions of any kind in design, color or any other element. (4) Promotional material may not be used to create any of the items without written permission from NCEA (5) Except as necessary for its own use, a Catholic parish, (arch)diocese or organization owned and controlled by a Catholic entity may not authorize a commercial vendor to create or distribute items using the logo or any other promotional material without the prior written permission of the Project Director, NCEA Religious Education Department. Except as provided above, no promotional material may be reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner.

Sections of the National Catholic Schools Week 2013 Marketing Handbook were adapted with permission.

Edited by Lori Dahlhoff

# Table of Contents

Overview of Parish Religious Education Week ..... 1

How to Celebrate along with NCEA ..... 2

A Week of Ideas for Celebrating Parish Religious Education ..... 3

Appendix A: Sample Mass Intentions Highlighting Parish Catechesis ..... 4

Appendix B: Key Facts about Parish Catechesis ..... 5

Appendix C: Prayer Reflection on the Road to Emmaus ..... 7

Appendix D: Supporting Leaders in Parish Catechesis ..... 10

Appendix E: Certificate of Special Appreciation ..... 12

Appendix F: Tips for Sharing Good News from Parish Religious Education ..... 14

Appendix G: Sample Announcements ..... 15

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) is excited to mark the Year of Faith by celebrating its first Parish Religious Education Week in November 2013. Our initial offering for this annual observance is intentionally simple, allowing the celebration to develop over time as experience and partnerships expand under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

The idea of a distinct, national celebration of parish catechesis has surfaced repeatedly over the past few decades. Local and regional celebrations already exist in some parts of the country. NCEA's offerings build on these efforts as well as the service of women and men, adults, youth, and children, laity, ordained, and professed religious in echoing the Gospel and helping people grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.

**Special thanks go to the following for their contributions to initiating NCEA's celebration of Parish Religious Education Week:**

## Project Development Team

Barb Morgan, OFS, Director of Parish School of Religion, Immaculate Conception, Dardenne Prairie, MO

Brigid Johnson, Director of Religious Education, Immaculate Conception Church, Knoxville, TN

Cathy Marbury, Associate Director of Religious Education, Office of Formation and Discipleship Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta

Cathy Roberts, Director of Family Faith Formation, St. John Nepomucene R.C. Church, Bohemia NY

Jayne Mondoy, Director, Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Honolulu

Dr. Joe Bound, Director of Education, Diocese of Green Bay

Dr. Lori Dahlhoff, Executive Director, NCEA Religious Education Department

Present and past members of the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors (NPCD)

New England Conference of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education

Mary Alice Pail, CSJ, Director of Faith Formation, Diocese of Rockville Center, NY

Dr. Peter Murphy, Executive Director, Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

National Catholic Schools Week 2013 - National Marketing Campaign for Catholic Schools Committee

## NCEA Staff

Br. Robert Bimonte, FSC, President

Dr. Karen Ristau, Past President

Marcella (Mickie) Abatemarco, Associate Executive Director, Religious Education Department

Anne Balzhiser, Administrative Assistant, Religious Education Department

Barbara Keebler, Director of Communications

Kisha Briscoe, Digital Marketing Coordinator and Webmaster

**ABOUT THE COVER: The word cloud represents the wide variety of names used currently to identify parish religious education and faith formation programs.** The size of the program title in the graphic corresponds to the frequency it was reported: the larger the words the more frequently it was

reported as being used to identify parish catechetical programs. Thank you to the more than 200 NPCD members who responded to the survey that led to this graphic.

## Overview of Parish Religious Education Week

Every day of the week some type of religious education activity is going on in a parish somewhere in the United States and its territories. As the hub of lifelong faith formation, the parish – both the people and the place – weaves together essential strands within the fabric of effective Catholic education. NCEA's annual Parish Religious Education Week celebration highlights the vital role of parish in fulfilling the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis.

### What is it?

A team of parish and diocesan catechetical leaders from across the country worked with NCEA staff to design an annual celebration of the diversity of parish catechetical efforts while also complementing existing celebrations of Catholic education. While taking the initial steps to launch this celebration as a single organization, NCEA plans to expand and strengthen the effort over time, including working with other organizations focused on religious education and faith formation.

Goals for the first few years of the new celebration include:

- Honoring those serving in parish religious education
- Sharing the contributions parish communities are making to sound education in the Catholic faith
- Helping build bridges between Catholic parish and school educational programs as well as other entities that provide religious instruction and ongoing faith formation.

During this week, NCEA encourages people across the country to engage in at least one activity aimed at achieving these goals. This celebration guide offers activity suggestions drawn from contributors from around the country. The guide is available free of charge for this inaugural year as a gift from NCEA during the Year of Faith.

### When is it?

The development team established the week Sunday of November as the annual beginning for Parish Religious Education Week. This week was selected for two primary reasons: the proximity to the liturgical celebration of the communion of saints and the likelihood that parishes will be well into formal programming by that point in the year. The guide is written to allow flexibility to schedule a local celebration that best fits the needs of the adults, youth, and children engaged in the faith formation and religious education in the parish community. For example, the dioceses in New England celebrate all of November as Religious Education Month.

### Why start now?

The idea of a national celebration of parish religious education has surfaced repeatedly among catechetical leaders for decades. Three key factors prompting the first celebration in 2013 are:

*Timing:* The Year of Faith, the anniversaries of Vatican II, and the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* all focus on intentional, lifelong catechesis of all the baptized. The parish is essential to this work. Now is an opportune time for NCEA to highlight parishes more visibly, especially since January 2014 will mark the 40th celebration of National Catholic Schools Week.

*Mission:* "Catechetical pedagogy will be effective to the extent that the Christian community becomes the point of concrete reference for the faith journey of individuals. This happens when the community is proposed as a source, locus and means of catechesis. Concretely, the community becomes a visible place of faith-witness. It provides for the formation of its members. It receives them as the family of God. It constitutes itself as the living and permanent environment for faith growth" General Directory for Catechesis, no. 158.

*Numbers:* In the framework of lifelong catechesis, parishes carry the majority of the responsibility for formal catechetical activity. According to the 2013 Official Catholic Directory, 17,990 parishes in the United States are centers for the ongoing religious education and faith formation for 69.4 million Catholics. More than 4 million children and youth, about two-thirds of Catholic young people enrolled in catechetical programs in the United States, receive formal religious education through parish-based efforts.

### **How to celebrate along with NCEA?**

Faith communities across the country are encouraged to celebrate the parish "as the living and permanent environment for faith growth" (General Directory for Catechesis, no. 158) when and how it best fits the local situation. A basic way anyone can join in the celebration is to praise God for giving the world the Good News of Jesus Christ and entrusting the Church with the mission of proclaiming him through who we are, what we teach, and how we exercise discipleship through participation in parishes.

This celebration guide outlines seven suggestions for activities - or a "week" of ideas - to mark the occasion through parish-based catechetical efforts or by participating in national events. The guiding theme is ***Encountering Christ Every Day ~ Encuentro con Cristo cada día***. Additional ideas may be drawn from [Catechetical Sunday 2013](#) (Year of Faith: Open the Door of Faith) or the Year of Faith [International Conference on Catechesis](#) and Day for Catechists in Rome (The Catechist: A Witness of Faith).

Consider starting this year with an eye toward building on these efforts over time. Here is a sample preparation timeline:

**September 2013 ..... Familiarize** yourself with the reason for the celebration and then **Plan** when and how the local community will celebrate parish catechesis

**October 2013 ..... Promote** the parish celebration

**November 2013 ..... Celebrate**, making sure to record the event (s) in photos, videos, print, or other media and sharing the experiences with the whole parish community as well as the diocese and NCEA

**December 2013..... Review** the celebration including gathering feedback from participants and generating ideas for future activities

**May all we do to advance the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis glorify God as we celebrate encountering Christ every day.**

## A Week of Ideas for Celebrating Parish Religious Education

There are as many different ways to celebrate the parish for her efforts in deepening and handing on the Catholic faith as there are parish faith communities and people in them. Use these seven ideas during Parish Religious Education Week 2013 to spark local creativity. Samples and background information for various activities are included as appendices to this guide or as hyperlinks.

1. **WORSHIP:** Include special intentions in the prayers of the faithful during Sunday mass and in daily masses throughout the week [Appendix A].
2. **INFORM:** Offer a special in-service about the goals and important concerns being addressed in parish religious education programs for parish advisory groups such as the pastoral council, faith formation committee, or Catholic school board [Appendix B].  
Example: On Monday, November 4 at 2-3 pm ET and 7-8 pm ET, NCEA's Boards and Councils Department and Religious Education Department will offer a free webinar focusing on "The Role of Advisory Groups in Effective Catechetical Planning." Check [NCEA's website](#) in early October for more details and to register.
3. **PRAY:** Begin regularly scheduled faith formation/religious education sessions with a special prayer service [Appendix C].  
Example: Start a family sacramental preparation session with "[A Prayer for Family Commitment](#)" from the USCCB Catechetical Sunday 2013 resources.
4. **HONOR:** Recognize local leaders of parish catechesis for their work on behalf of the faith community, especially the pastor and director or coordinator of religious education programs [Appendix D & E].  
Example: On Parish Catechetical Leader Appreciation Day – Wednesday, November 6 –gift your local leaders with the "[Open the Door of Faith](#)" pin and reflection journal available from the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership.
5. **TELL:** Share the good news about what the parish has done, and is doing, to form and educate people of all ages in the Catholic faith and Christian discipleship [Appendix B & F].  
Example: The Diocese of Rockville Centre produced a [video](#) about how families and the parish are working together to catechize children.
6. **STUDY:** Create and distribute a scripture study guide focused on sharing the Good News.  
Example: [New England "Celebrate Religious Education 2012" Guide](#) p. 11-12.
7. **SERVE:** Express the interrelated nature of parish catechesis by connecting various aspects of the community in serving with and for one another, such as organizing a service day or connecting parish and Catholic school learners who utilize the same space.  
Example: NCEA will be conducting a social media campaign throughout the week that will include stories of how Catholic schools and parishes are working together. Join us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter ([@NCEALDahlhoff](#) or [@NCEATalk](#)).



## Appendix A: Sample Mass Intentions Highlighting Parish Catechesis

Let us ask our eternal Father, who in Christ has given us a well-spring of truth and love, to renew us in our commitment to proclaim the Gospel and to form one another in the Catholic faith.

For the Church, that all who are baptized may proclaim the Gospel in their words and through their lives, we pray:

For Pope Francis, [name of local bishop] and all bishops, that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide them in their role as chief catechist, we pray:

For our local and national leaders, that God's love and truth will inspire them to uphold religious freedom and to give special consideration to the poor and vulnerable, we pray:

For pastors, especially [name of pastor], that they will draw upon Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist to strengthen the Body of Christ through their teaching and preaching, we pray:

For all those who by their work and their contributions have made our parish catechetical programs possible, especially [name of parish catechetical leader(s)] and our catechists, that they will remain close to Jesus Christ, the one Teacher and first Evangelizer, we pray:

For the adults, youth, children and families of our parish, that they will continue to grow in knowledge and love for one another and for God, we pray:

For our parish community, that God may continue to bless all our efforts to help one another encounter Christ and grow in faith every day, we pray:

For all of us, that the seeds of faith that have been planted in our hearts will grow strong and bear much fruit to nourish the world, we pray:

For those who have died, that their witness of faith will bring them into the light of God's presence, we pray:

## **Appendix B: Key Facts about Parish Catechesis**

Catholic parishes, schools, and (arch)dioceses  
may reproduce the following page for use in celebrating  
Parish Religious Education Week 2013

## Key Facts in Parish Catechesis

### Special Terminology

**Catechesis** [kat-i-**kee**-sis] = “an education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Glossary

**Catechetical Leaders** [kat-i-**ket**-i-kuh | lee-ders] = men and women who exercise a leadership role for catechesis in a parish or Catholic school working under the guidance of the pastor and in collaboration with the local bishop. *National Directory of Catechesis*, Chapter 8

**Evangelization** [ih-**van**-juh-lahy-zay-shuh-n] = “the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ’s command.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Glossary

### Role of the Parish in Catechesis

**The entire parish community is responsible for catechesis.** Most people’s primary experience of the Church is the parish. The parish is “the living and permanent environment for growth in the faith. The parish energizes the faithful to carry out Christ’s mission by spiritual, moral, and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners.” *National Directory of Catechesis*, USCCB, no. 60

### Key Roles in Lifelong Faith Formation *General Directory for Catechesis*, Vatican, no. 215-284

- ❖ Local Faith Community/Parish
- ❖ Parents/Guardians and Family
- ❖ Parish/School Leadership (including catechists)
- ❖ Bishop
- ❖ Diocesan Catechetical Office

### National Statistics about Catholic Education of Children and Youth

From *The Official Catholic Directory* 2013, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, p. 2087. Totals include U.S. territories and Eastern Rite Catholic churches

Total Catholic population = 69,436,660 individuals

Number of Parishes = 17,990

Parish Religious Education enrollment = 3,429,919 students (2,776,777 elementary + 653,142 high school)

Number of Catholic elementary schools = 5,672 schools (5,291 diocesan/parish + 381 private)

Catholic elementary school enrollment = 1,440,232 students (1,347,016 diocesan/parish + 93,216 private)

Number of Catholic high schools = 1,314 schools (721 diocesan/parish + 593 private)

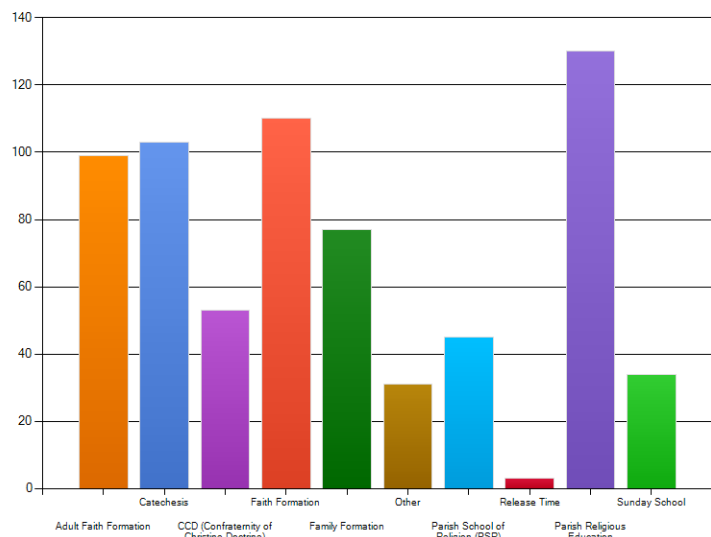
Catholic high school enrollment = 612,616 students (319,164 diocesan/parish + 293,452 private)

### What is in a Name

People use many different terms to identify the work of parish catechesis. A spring 2013 survey of members of the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors (NPCD) found over 40 different names used for parish-based programs. The three most commonly used terms are:

- Parish Religious Education
- Faith Formation
- Catechesis

Programs are offered in many languages including Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish,



Polish, Korean, French, English, and American Sign Language.

## Appendix C: Prayer Reflection on the Road to Emmaus

Created by Jayne Mondoy

### LEADER GUIDE

**Setting the sacred space for praying with adults or families:** bible, lit candle, music playing softly in background, project a [prepared slideshow](#) with responses or print prayer guide for participants

#### *Gathering*

Leader: **In our baptism each of us is called be a catechist, an "echoer" of Christ. Some have answered the call to formal parish catechetical ministry, taking on the special role of partnering with learners, families, parents and the church community to form God's People in faith and in a spirit of great joy. In thanksgiving for their loving commitment and for each one of us, we gather in the name of Jesus Christ to listen to and reflect upon the story of The Road to Emmaus.**

All: In the name of the Father... *[make Sign of the Cross]*

#### *Reading from Sacred Scripture*      Luke 24:13 - 35 The Road to Emmaus

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke...The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

#### *Reflecting and Responding*

Leader: **This Gospel reading is in many ways a source of inspiration for those who form others in faith and proclaim the Good News in their daily lives. As we reflect on select verses, I ask you to join in the response thus affirming your commitment to growing in faith for yourself and others.**

Leader: **"Jesus himself approached them and walked with them."**

All: As a child of God I, too, am on a journey -- my own faith journey. Although at times I may not recognize Christ's presence, I pray that I may be open to Christ's eternal presence and walk in His light.

Leader: **"He went and stayed with them."**

All: In Baptism and Confirmation I receive and am sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. May God continue to find a dwelling place in my heart.

Leader: **"When he was at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them."**

All: Strengthened by the precious Body and Blood of Christ, may I be a source of nourishment to those I serve and love.

Leader: **"They recounted what happened and how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread."**

All: As the hearts of the Emmaus-walkers burned within them so long ago, I, too, experience the source of warmth and light when I recognize Christ present among us. May my words and actions reflect my fidelity to the Gospel, and may I lead others to witness to Jesus.

## **Closing**

Leader: **Let us join hands and ask God to bless us\*\* as we pray together.**

All: Be with us, Lord Jesus, on our road to Emmaus,  
Guide us on our journey and nourish us  
as we continue to walk in your Light.  
Open our eyes that we may see your presence among us;  
Open our hearts, that we may reflect your love;  
and empower each of us and our whole parish to echo the Truth  
That is found in you alone.  
We ask this through the power of the Blessed Trinity:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
Amen. ***[make sign of cross over self]***.

\* This prayer may be adapted for use with particular groups by changing this word to catechist, parent, child of God, etc.

\*\* The closing prayer may be adapted into a special blessing by identifying the particular group, asking the assembly to extend hands over the group members, and using an alternative text such as:

Leader: **Let us extend our hands over our catechists and ask God to bless them as we pray together.**

All: Lord Jesus, you are with us on our road to Emmaus,  
Guide us on our journey and nourish us  
as we continue to walk in your Light.  
Open our eyes that we may see your presence among us;  
Open our hearts, that we may reflect your love;  
and empower our catechists to echo the Truth  
That is found in you alone.  
We ask this through the power of the Blessed Trinity:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## Prayer Reflection on the Road to Emmaus

### *Gathering*

*Reading from Sacred Scripture:* Luke 24:13 - 35

PARISH  
Religious Education  
WEEK   
November 3–9, 2013

### *Reflecting and Responding*

Leader: This Gospel reading is in many ways a source of inspiration for those who form others in faith and proclaim the Good News in their daily lives. As we reflect on select verses, I ask you to join in the response thus affirming your commitment to growing in faith for yourself and others.

Leader: "Jesus himself approached them and walked with them."

All: **As a child of God I too am on a journey -- my own faith journey. Although at times I may not recognize Christ's presence, I pray that I may be open to Christ's eternal presence and walk in His light.**

Leader: "He went and stayed with them."

All: **In Baptism and Confirmation I was sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. May God continue to find a dwelling place in my heart.**

Leader: "When he was at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them."

All: **Strengthened by the precious Body and Blood of Christ, may I be a source of nourishment to those I serve and love.**

Leader: "They recounted what happened and how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread."

All: **As the hearts of the Emmaus-walkers burned within them so long ago, I, too, experience the source of warmth and light when I recognize Christ present among us. May my words and actions reflect my fidelity to the Gospel, and may I lead others to witness to Jesus.**

### *Closing*

Leader: Let us join hands and ask God to bless us as we pray together.

All: **Be with us, Lord Jesus, on our road to Emmaus,  
Guide us on our journey and nourish us  
as we continue to walk in your Light.  
Open our eyes that we may see your presence among us;  
Open our hearts, that we may reflect your love;  
and empower each of us and our whole parish to echo the Truth  
That is found in you alone.  
We ask this through the power of the Blessed Trinity:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
Amen.**

## **Appendix D: Supporting Leaders in Parish Catechesis**

Catholic parishes, schools, and (arch)dioceses  
may reproduce the following page for use in celebrating  
Parish Religious Education Week 2013



## Supporting Leaders in Parish Catechesis

Certain roles of leadership and corresponding pastoral structures constitute a ministerial infrastructure that is necessary to sustain a healthy parish practice of lifelong faith formation. While the whole parish is responsible for catechetical ministry, the key leadership roles serve as critical lead agents for effective ministry. *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, USCCB, no. 124-126

### Key Roles in Lifelong Faith Formation

*General Directory for Catechesis*, Vatican, no. 215-284

- ❖ Local Faith Community/Parish
- ❖ Parents/Guardians and Family
- ❖ Parish/School Leadership
- ❖ Bishop
- ❖ Diocesan Catechetical Office

### Local Leadership Roles in Parish Catechesis

*National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, no. 54

- ❖ the pastor and other pastoral leaders
- ❖ the faith formation/religious education leader
- ❖ the faith formation team collaborating with leaders
- ❖ the catechists

### Parish Catechetical Leaders

from *National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, 2005, no. 54 B.5

While functions vary from parish to parish, “parish catechetical leaders are not simply administrators or general pastoral ministers. The need for systematic training and study should not be minimized. They are catechists first. They should continue their personal, spiritual, and professional development and participate in diocesan programs of inservice training and formation, catechetical institutes, conventions, retreats, and accredited programs.”

#### Commonly Used Titles

- Director of Religious Education
- Faith Formation Coordinator
- Director of Catechesis
- Coordinator of Youth Ministry
- RCIA Director
- Campus Minister
- Principal

### Main Responsibilities

The bishops of the United States identified main responsibilities of the parish catechetical leader working under the direction of a pastor:

- ❖ Direct overall parish catechetical programs for adults, youth, and children
- ❖ Plan, implement, and evaluate the parish catechetical program
- ❖ Recruit, form, develop continually, and evaluate catechists
- ❖ Implement diocesan and parish policies and guidelines, including safety and protection of minors
- ❖ Collaborate with pastor, other parish ministers, and advisory bodies
- ❖ Assist in liturgical planning
- ❖ Attend to own personal, spiritual, and professional development

### Basic Qualifications

- ❖ Fully initiated, practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church
- ❖ Prepared for service including advanced studies in a variety of areas such as theology and catechesis
- ❖ Practical catechetical experience with adults, youth, and children
- ❖ Comprehensive knowledge of the *General Directory for Catechesis* and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

### Signs of Parish Support for the Catechetical Leader

- ❖ Clear, specific work agreement listing position responsibilities and equitable compensation
- ❖ Treated as a full member of the parish pastoral staff, including attending meetings and annual evaluation
- ❖ Allocation of adequate resources, including funding and access to consistent advisory committees

- ✦ Provide opportunities to develop the competence and skills necessary for effective leadership and thorough knowledge of the faith, including time and funding for professional development

*Parish Religious Education Week Celebration Guide 2013* © National Catholic Educational Association

## **Appendix E: Certificate of Special Appreciation**

Catholic parishes, schools, and (arch)dioceses  
may reproduce the following page for use in celebrating  
Parish Religious Education Week 2013

# Certificate of Special Appreciation



*During Parish Religious Education Week 2013,*

name of parish

*celebrates the fact that Catholic parishes focus on helping adults, youth, and children grow in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and*

*that through your dedicated service and selfless contributions of time and talent,  
you have helped ensure the success of the parish and  
support its mission of providing a high-quality, faith-filled education.*

*It is fitting that such contributions be recognized and honored.  
Therefore, our parish community acknowledges and extends its deepest appreciation to*

name of person

Given this \_\_\_\_ day of November in the Year of Our Lord 2013.

Pastor

Chair, Parish Pastoral Council

## Appendix F: Tips for Sharing Good News from Parish Religious Education

- ✦ **Start with what you are doing now.** Present a brief summary of what is currently going on in the parish's faith formation and religious instruction programming. What works? What has been improved or expanded in the last few years? Show the numbers and, when possible, the faces of those participating in formal programs sponsored through the parish.
- ✦ **Determine your audiences.** Figure out what audiences you need to reach within the parish and beyond. For most parishes, those include parishioners, parents, guardians, current and prospective students, grandparents, potential volunteers, new community residents, and community leaders.
- ✦ **Craft key messages.** Determine messages that will resonate with each audience and what you want them to do as a result, such as pray for those involved in sacramental preparation, enroll or keep their children in the parish religious education program, sign up for an adult bible study, be trained as a catechist, or provide volunteer support. For example, parents of prospective students may want high-quality, faith-based education that also incorporates web tools for families so emphasize in your story-telling how your programs meets those desires.
- ✦ **Develop tactics.** Determine how you will reach each audience with your messages. Tactics include newsletters, online postings, YouTube videos, radio campaigns, and yard signs. You can also use personal contact and social media. Another tool is special events, such as open houses, educational seminars or parish gatherings. You can reach into the community by organizing service projects, setting up student displays in public spaces, and arranging for student musical and drama groups to participate in festivals.
- ✦ **Put it all together in a plan.** For each audience, list the tactics you will use to achieve your goals and objectives. Specify who is responsible for each task, what resources are needed and when each task will be completed. Review your plan to make sure that it's doable with the people and resources available, that it will help you achieve your goals, and that it will enhance your parish's evangelizing and catechizing mission.

## Appendix G: Sample Announcements

*Parishes have a variety of media options to promote their Parish Religious Education Week activities, including the parish bulletin, the school website, the pastor's blog and social media. Use the following samples to develop your own Parish Religious Education Week announcements.*

### Sample Graphic Identifiers

✚ SEMANA DE  
Educación Religiosa  
PARROQUIAL  
3-9 de Noviembre 2013

✚ SEMANA DE  
Educación Religiosa  
PARROQUIAL  
3-9 de Noviembre 2013

PARISH  
Religious Education  
WEEK ✚  
November 3–9, 2013

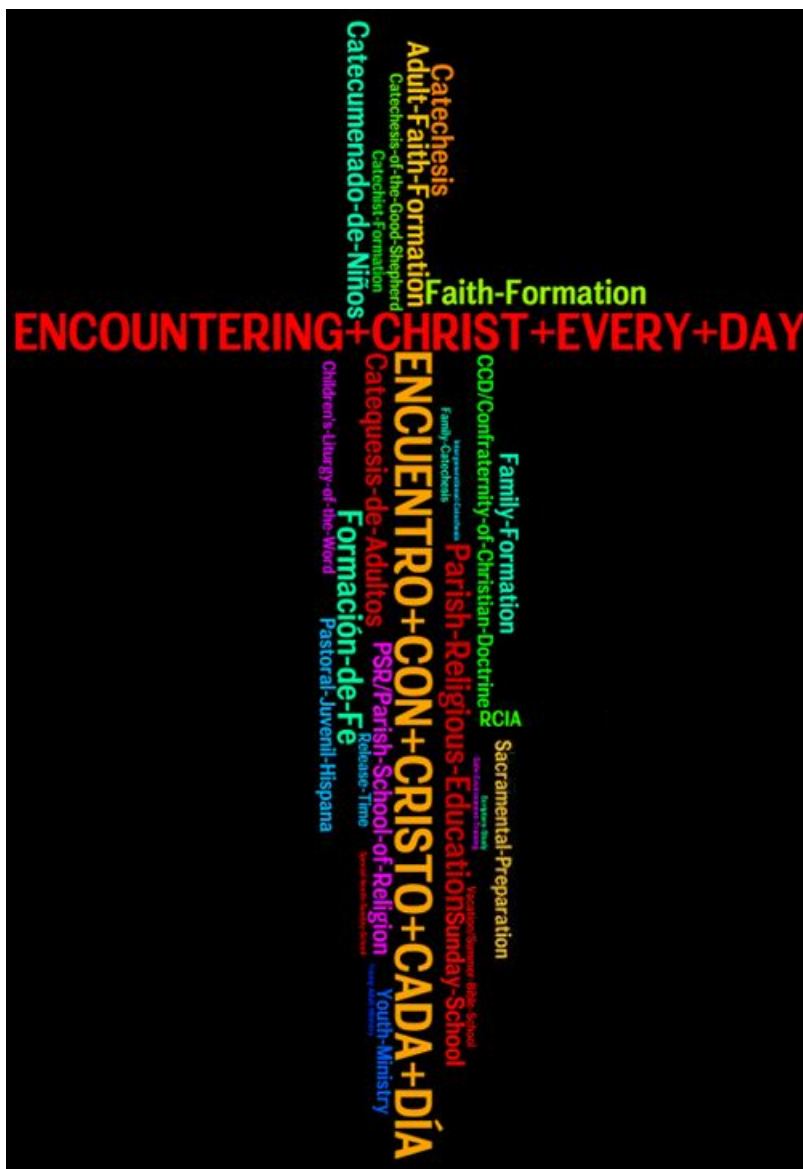
PARISH  
Religious Education  
WEEK ✚  
November 3–9, 2013

### Annual National Celebrations of Catechesis (Coordinating Organization)

- ❖ Catechetical Sunday: 3rd Sunday of September (USCCB)
- ❖ National World Youth Day: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (USCCB/NFCYM)
- ❖ Parish Religious Education Week: Starts the first Sunday in November (NCEA)
- ❖ Parish Catechetical Leader Appreciation Day: Wednesday during Parish Religious Education Week (NCEA)
- ❖ Principal Appreciation Day: Thursday before Thanksgiving (NCEA)
- ❖ National Catholic Schools Week: Starts the last Sunday of January (NCEA/USCCB)
- ❖ Teacher Appreciation Day: Friday during National Catholic Schools Week (NCEA/USCCB)
- ❖ Pastor Appreciation Day: Good Shepherd Sunday, 4th week of Easter (NCEA)

# Parish Religious Education Week

## November 3-9, 2013



**Celebrating how [name of parish]  
helps adults, youth, and children continue to grow  
in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church**

## Bulletin Notices

### **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, September 8, 2013**

In November, we will join in a national celebration of Parish Religious Education Week. The celebration highlights how parish faith formation programs help adults, youth, and children encounter Christ every day and grow in our Catholic faith. Watch the bulletin for a schedule of events or go to [website address]. To volunteer during the festivities, please contact [phone number and email address of parish celebration coordinator].

### **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, October 6, 2013**

In four weeks, we'll begin a celebration of Parish Religious Education Week, when we highlight how our parish faith formation programs help adults, youth, and children encounter Christ every day and the value they add to our community. Watch the bulletin for a schedule of events or go to [website address]. To volunteer during the festivities, please contact [phone number and email address of parish celebration coordinator].

### **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, October 20, 2013**

In two weeks, we'll begin our celebration of Parish Religious Education Week, when we celebrate how our parish faith formation programs help adults, youth, and children encounter Christ every day and the value they add to our community. See next week's bulletin for the schedule of events or go to [website address]. To volunteer during the festivities, please contact [phone number and email address of parish celebration coordinator].

### **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, October 27, 2013**

Please join in celebrating Parish Religious Education Week, beginning next Sunday, November 3. This year's theme is "Encountering Christ Every Day," which celebrates our focus on lifelong faith formation. We have planned a variety of activities to show how our parish helps adults, youth, and children know and love Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church more deeply through our religious education efforts.

Sunday, November 3—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Worship  
[events, locations, times]

Monday, November 4— Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Parish  
[events, locations, times]

Tuesday, November 5—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Programs  
[events, locations, times]

Wednesday, November 6—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Leaders  
[events, locations, times]

Thursday, November 7—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Learners  
[events, locations, times]

Friday, November 8—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Study  
[events, locations, times]

Saturday, November 9—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Community  
[events, locations, times]

## **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, November 3, 2013**

[Name of parish] Encounters Christ Every Day

Today we begin our celebration of Parish Religious Education Week. This year's theme is "Encountering Christ Every Day," which celebrates our focus on lifelong faith formation. We have planned a variety of activities to show how our parish helps adults, youth, and children know and love Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church more deeply through our religious education efforts.



Sunday, November 3—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Worship  
[events, locations, times]

Wednesday, November 6—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Learners, Leaders, and Catechists  
[events, locations, times]

Saturday, November 9—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Community  
[events, locations, times]

## **Bulletin Notice for Sunday, November 9, 2013**

[name of pastor and faith formation staff] thank all of the families, parishioners and friends who helped make our celebration of Parish Religious Education Week a success. We appreciate the time you spent to learn what [name of parish] is doing to help people encounter Christ every day through our religious education efforts. Check out pictures from the festivities on [website or display location].

## **Announcement for Website, Blog or Social Media Network**

[Name of parish]: Encountering Christ Every Day

Join us for Parish Religious Education Week, starting Sunday, November 3.

This year's theme, "Encountering Christ Every Day," expresses our focus on lifelong faith formation. We have planned a variety of activities to show how our parish helps adults, youth, and children know and love Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church more deeply through our religious education efforts. Please join us!

Sunday, November 3—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Worship [events, locations, times]

Monday, November 4— Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Parish [events, locations, times]

Tuesday, November 5—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Programs [events, locations, times]

Wednesday, November 6—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Learners, Leaders, and Volunteers [events, locations, times]

Thursday, November 7—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Prayer [events, locations, times]

Friday, November 8—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Study [events, locations, times]

Saturday, November 9—Encountering Christ Every Day: In Our Community [events, locations, times]

For more information, contact [phone number and email address of parish celebration coordinator].



## Sample News Release

*Adapt the following news release to your parish's Parish Religious Education Week observance. Include the week's event schedule and a fact sheet on your parish with your release.*

### For more information:

[Spokesperson's name]

[Parish name]

[Address]

[Phone number]

[E-mail address]

[Web site address]

### For Immediate Release—[date]

### [Parish] Plans Celebration of Parish Religious Education Week

**City, State**—The first Parish Religious Education Week will be held at [parish name] the week of November 3-9, 2013

The event is part of a nationwide celebration of parish religious education which will be held annually, starting the first Sunday in November. This year's theme is "Encountering Christ Every Day." The theme reflects that every day of the week some type of religious education activity is going on in a parish somewhere in the United States and its territories.

[Name of pastor] invites parishioners and all members of the community to celebrate with [name of parish] during the week. "This is a great opportunity for our parish to open our doors to all," said [name of pastor]. "Religious education is a key activity in our parish and we're eager for parishioners, potential members of the church and the entire community to learn more about our programs and meet our outstanding religious education staff and volunteers."

[Detail highlights of the week at the parish.]

[Provide information on the parish – area that it serves, number of parishioners, activities etc.]

Parish Religious Education Week is an initiative of the National Catholic Educational Association, a national professional educational association representing members serving in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs, on boards, seminaries and in colleges.

### 2013 Theme: Encountering Christ Every Day ~ Encuentro con Cristo cada día.

Every day of the week some type of religious education activity is going on in a parish somewhere in the United States and its territories. As the hub of lifelong faith formation, the parish – both the people and the place – weaves together essential strands within the fabric of effective Catholic education. NCEA's annual Parish Religious Education Week celebration highlights the vital role of parish in fulfilling the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis.

**Additional information related to celebrating Parish Religious Education Week will be posted on [NCEA's website](#) as it becomes available, including materials in Spanish.**

Please contact [Lori Dahlhoff](#), Executive Director of NCEA Religious Education Department, if you create a local announcement or other celebration material you would considered for future celebration guides.



**National Catholic Educational Association**  
Religious Education Department