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CATECHIST OBSERVATION

The *General Directory for Catechesis* tells us that 'to ensure the working of the catechetical ministry in a local Church, it is fundamental to have adequate pastoral care of catechists (233).' Part of this care is giving catechists meaningful, constructive and focused feedback on their presentation of the faith to their students. This is done through Catechist Observation.

Catechetical Leaders need to keep in mind that classroom observation is a part of the pastoral care of the catechist – not an evaluation. Catechetical Leaders are offering feedback in order to help the Catechist improve their classroom technique and, more importantly, their sharing of the faith with their students. Always keeping in mind the disciples-making-disciples aspect of the catechist's ministry, the Observer should keep the focus on how the students, through the catechist, are growing in their faith.

It is important that the Post-Observation Conference be a positive experience for the Catechist. The Observer should look for and make note of the Catechist's strengths in presentation of the faith – both in words and in actions. Areas of difficulty for the teacher should be presented as 'What do you think would happen if you presented it *this* way instead of how you did?' Think of the observation as an opportunity for coaching or mentoring the Catechist. Discuss ideas of how to improve their catechesis.

For the sake of consistency, Observers must be a *Vocare-certified* DRE/CRE/PCL, a *Vocare-certified* principal, or a catechist who has been at least 8 years in catechetical ministry. The catechetical experience of these veteran Observers provides meaningful feedback for Catechists.

Because of the need for 'due diligence' on the part of the Office for Evangelization and Discipleship, observations must be verified. For this reason, observers are required to complete and submit the online Catechist Observation form to VocareSupport.

[Observation #1](#) must be completed within the first 2 years of catechetical ministry. [Observation #2](#) should be completed in either years 3 or 4 of catechetical ministry. [Observation #3](#) should be completed in either years 5 or 6 of catechetical ministry. These years correspond roughly to the completion of Call, Witness, and Proclaim. There may not be more than one Observation in the same fiscal year.

Procedure for Observations of Catechetical Sessions

Before the Observation:

1. The Observer prints 2 copies of the *Catechist Observation Guide* that is appropriate - #1, #2, or #3 according to the above criteria.
2. The Observer reviews with the Catechist the purpose of the observation – what it is and is not as stated in the introduction above.
3. The Catechist is given a blank copy of the *Catechist Observation Guide* and alerted to the reflection questions that will be discussed (answers do *not* need to be written).
4. The Catechist and Observer agree upon the date the observation will take place.

During the Observation:

1. The Observer watches the Catechist and the students for interactions, appropriate use of catechetical process, activities appropriate to the lesson and age of students, classroom atmosphere, discipline procedures, prayer experience, etc.
2. Comments are recorded on the *Catechist Observation Guide*.
3. The Catechist and Observer agree upon a date for the Post-Observation Conference.

During the Post-Observation Conference

1. The Catechist is given a copy of the completed *Catechist Observation Guide* and some time to look it over.
2. While giving time for the Catechist to review the *Guide*, the Observer prays for openness to be the presence of Christ and for the Catechist during the Conference.
2. The Conference begins with prayer.
3. The Observer and Catechist review the catechetical session using the *Guide*.
4. The Observer and Catechist discuss the reflection questions. This should be a two-way conversation of the questions. Go for *quality* in the discussion!
5. The Conference ends with prayer.

After the Post-Observation Conference

The Observer completes the Catechist Observation Form located [HERE](#).
Once the form is submitted, the Observation is complete.

Thank you for your ministry to your catechists! Your positive feedback, with an attitude toward improvement for the student's sake, will go far in helping your catechist disciple their students. God's blessings be yours!