Primer on the Current State of Catechetical Standards & Formation Guidance

In July 2024, the USCCB's Institute on the Catechism promulgated an updated *Handbook on the Catechetical Accompaniment Process*, focused on the Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and informed by the 2020 *Directory for Catechesis*. This lengthy document lays out newly developed Catechetical Goals (Interior, Behavioral, and Cognitive) for Early Childhood through Pre-Adolescence (age 14) and those preparing for Sacraments. It also defines key terms such as "evangelizing catechesis," and sets both Catechist Goals and Parent/Family Goals to complement the Catechetical Goals.

The 2024 *Handbook* is designed for use primarily by publishers and diocesan officials, but those who are so inclined are invited to explore its pages, as well. Its contents provide a comprehensive look at the catechetical hopes and expectations which will set the norms for resources going forward.

As those norms unfold, please refer to existing Archdiocese of Baltimore Guidance and collaborate with the Office of Family, Youth, and Young Adult Ministry in implementing new (or renewed) catechetical materials, formats, or methods in your particular context:

- The 2024 ***Family Faith Formation Guidance*** is the primary guiding document for all parish faith formation for children (and should serve as a touchstone for all other formation, as well).
- The expectation of comprehensive **Catechesis for Family Life (CFL)** remains in effect, as does our longstanding commitment to educating around safe environment practices and abuse prevention.
    - Note that while ***Created to Love*** remains a CFL option for grade 6-8, and is currently the *only* option for high school CFL, we are aware that the material needs to be updated. We are working to consult the necessary parties and develop an updated option(s). Parishes must still meet the requirements for CFL while updated resources are being developed.
- Regarding the **content of Pre-K through 8th Grade catechesis** in parishes, the document *Bringing Good News* may serve as a reference as it has not yet been superseded by an equivalent document, but please note that the framing of the Catechetical Goals in the 2024 *Handbook* differs, sometimes significantly. Where they diverge, err on the side of the more recent *Handbook*.
    - Parishes may continue to use materials that appear on the current USCCB Conformity List and/or which have been greenlit via conversation with the Office of Family, Youth, and Young Adult Ministry. If you are unsure about a resource, reach out to OFFYAM!
- **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:** Consult and become familiar with the appropriate Archdiocesan Policies for sacraments (https://www.policy.archbalt.org/sacraments/), and review additional guidance:
    - Confirmation: The Seal of the Spirit (2000) has been replaced by the 2022 ***Updated Guidelines for Confirmation Preparation*** in conjunction with the Confirmation Framework. Caveat: this document does not yet reflect the new standard age of Confirmation (age 9).
    - First Eucharist: The 2022 ***Updated Guidelines for First Eucharist Preparation*** remain in effect.
    - Marriage Preparation:
        - Leaders should be familiar with the *Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life.* Contact OFYYAM to learn how the Marriage Catechumenate is being implemented locally.
        - Assessments/Tools: Either Prepare/Enrich *(preferred)* or FOCCUS *(accepted).*
        - Couple-to-Couple Accompaniment: Witness to Love *(preferred)*
    - OCIA (formerly RCIA)/RICA and OCIA Adapted for Children/Teens: The Archdiocesan Policies for OCIA are currently under review. In most cases, the current RCIA guidance applies so long as appropriate language and wording changes are applied; however, please consult the ***Study Edition of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults***, review the OCIA resources provided via OFYYAM, and contact OFYYAM for clarification before proceeding.