

No. 2

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

Publications Department

1312 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.

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PLAN FOR ORGANIZING THE PARISH UNIT OF THE CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

- I. When a Confraternity is organized in autumn or winter, its initial work is usually the development of *religious discussion clubs*, the organization of *school year religious instruction classes*, or both. When organized in the spring, the *religious vacation school* is usually the initial work. The preparation of *discussion leaders* and *teachers of religion* is necessarily an important part of the organization plan.

The following organization procedure has been found practical:

1. Read the *Constitution for Parish Units of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*, on which this plan is based.
2. Each Confraternity unit shall be designated by the name of the patron of the parish in which it exists.
3. The Confraternity is not to be identified with or subordinate to any other society in the parish.
4. The coöperation of all the men's, women's and young people's societies of the parish should be sought by the Confraternity in carrying out its unified program



of religious instruction under the direction of the pastor. Further information as to how the religious departments of existing societies can develop the diocesan program authorized by the Bishop will be supplied on request by the Diocesan Office.

II. The Director of the Parish Confraternity:

1. Secures from the Diocesan Office a complete set of instructions for officers and chairmen of a parish Confraternity;
2. Appoints or arranges for the election of the officers and chairmen of the divisions of active membership; both men and women are eligible;
3. Calls a meeting of the officers and division chairmen, who with him form the Executive Board of the Confraternity, to discuss the literature and instructions, and to plan the program for the organization meeting of the parish Confraternity.

Members of the Executive Board should acquire a working knowledge of the *Manual of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*. When it is used by the Board as a discussion club text, they easily master the Confraternity program.

The organization meeting should include:

- a. A presentation of the Confraternity program for a parish unit — how it is organized and the work of each of the several divisions of active membership;
- b. An open discussion with questions answered by the organizer — the pastor or president;
- c. Enrollment of members according to the division of membership each wishes to work in (Enrollment forms are usually supplied by the Diocesan Office);

- d. Announcement of the place, day and hour of the first meeting of each division of the active membership, and the next general meeting of the Confraternity.

III. Parish Organization Meetings:

1. The Director calls a parish meeting for the organization of the Confraternity. All parishioners of high-school years and over should be invited and urged to attend, in order that they may have a clear understanding of the program. No financial obligation is assumed by attendance at this meeting, and those who join as active members pay no dues. Good publicity should be given to the meeting well in advance, from the altar, through the press, posters, telephone, etc. The program (II, 3, above) is presented.
2. Where missions are attached to a parish, a local section of the Confraternity should be organized and the membership division chairmen should be appointed at each mission.

IV. Before Launching the Program:

1. The immediate activity of the Confraternity will be a careful survey of the parish or mission to locate those in need of instruction and to secure information to be used in planning the Confraternity program of religious discussion clubs, school year instruction classes or religious vacation schools. (Obtain from the Diocesan Director the program for initial work.)

A Suggested Survey

- a. What is the approximate number of Catholic public school children in the parish?

- b. What provision is there for the religious instruction of children who attend the public schools?
 - c. What proportion of these children are at present receiving religious instruction?
 - d. Are there sections within the parish where the distance from church makes it difficult for the children to attend instruction classes.
 - e. Could suitable places near the public school be found in which to assemble the children for week-day instruction?
 - f. Is there any systematic plan of visiting the homes of children whose parents are indifferent?
 - g. What plans could be made to bring children of indifferent parents to Mass?
2. The Chairman of Fishers should supply members of the division with *Instructions for Fishers*, obtainable at the Diocesan Office. After a minimum of three preparatory meetings held under the supervision of the Director, fishers should begin systematic visiting.
 3. The Chairman of Helpers should supply members of the division with *Instructions for Helpers*, and arrange for preparatory meetings.
 4. A minimum of six demonstration classes should be held for the preparation of:
 - a. Discussion club leaders prior to each discussion-club semester. The Chairman of Discussion Clubs should supply leaders with copies of *Instructions for Discussion Club Leaders*.
 - b. Teachers, before the opening of each vacation school or series of instruction classes. The Chairman of Teachers should supply members of the division with *Instructions for Teachers*.
Teachers qualify for work by attendance at a minimum of six demonstration classes, and by the satisfactory completion of a definite course

outlined by the Diocesan Director of the Confraternity.

The initial project of the Confraternity determines whether discussion-club leaders, or teachers' classes or both will begin immediately after the organization meeting. For other meetings, see *Constitution*, Article V.

5. During the school year Confraternity members will cooperate with the pastor:
 - a. In the conduct of instruction classes for children. Plans for these classes should be made at least one month before the opening of the school year. The *School Year Religious Instruction Manuals* (Grades I, II; III-V; VI-VIII), issued by the Publications Department, are guides for the preparation of teachers.
 - b. In the organization of discussion clubs for high school students, out-of-school youth, and adults.
6. Careful plans are to be made by the Confraternity for the religious vacation school to be held each summer for children attending secular schools. The *Manuals of Religious Vacation Schools* (Grades I, II; III-V; VI-VIII) are guides in classes for the preparation of teachers and helpers. (The religious vacation school is not a substitute for the school year religious instruction classes. Even when both are well organized and conducted annually, they are not the equivalent of a Catholic school education.)
7. Each Confraternity should build up a library of selected teachers' references and should make additions annually. (Each diocese determines the texts and materials it will adopt for use.) A nucleus for this library — a minimum of references for effective work — costs about five dollars. A suggested list

may be found in the *Vacation School* and *School Year Religious Instruction Manuals*.

V. The following is a suggestion for "a religious program in missions on Sundays and holydays of obligation when the priest is not present to celebrate Mass":

1. Recitation of Rosary and Litany;
2. Congregational singing of hymns;
3. Devotions proper to feast, season or month;
4. Reading of the Epistle and Gospel for the day, and the explanation, e. g., Goffine's *Instructions*;
5. Catechetical instruction for children;
6. Religious discussion clubs for high school students and for adults (usually at same time as 5, above).

VI. Canonical Erection:

1. When the Ordinary has authorized the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, minimum parish requirements are:
 - a. Registration of members in a parish register of the Confraternity; "Members of the parochial units *must be* enrolled in order to gain the indulgences and participate in the other privileges granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs" (Article V, Sec. 35, Constitution, Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine, Rome).
 - b. Meetings at specified times under the supervision of the Parish Director.
2. The members of the local parish Confraternity may then gain the indulgences granted to the Archconfraternity as they perform the designated good works according to the requirements stated.

VII. Catechetical Day: From the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council on *The Better Care and*

Promotion of Catechetical Education, January 12, 1935:

"In order that the mind of the Christian people may be directed to religious instruction, let a Catechetical Day be established in each parish, if this has not already been done. On this day, let the feast of Christian Doctrine be celebrated with as much solemnity as possible. On this occasion:

- "a. Let the faithful be called together in a parish church and having received the Holy Eucharist pray to obtain greater fruit of divine teaching.
- "b. Let a special sermon be preached to the people on the necessity of catechetical education, in which parents will be warned that they should teach their children and send them to the parochial Catechism classes; remembering the divine command: 'And the words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt tell them to thy children' (Deut. 6:6).
- "c. Let books, pamphlets, leaflets and other things of this kind suitable for the purpose be distributed among the people.
- "d. Let a collection be made for the promotion of catechetical works."

For further information, apply to your Diocesan Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

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Nihil obstat. Henry J. Zolzer, Censor librorum.
Imprimatur. † Thomas H. McLaughlin, Bishop of Paterson.