

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

Publications Department



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THE RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOL

A standard religious vacation school is an organized school of religion conducted for three hours during the forenoon, five days a week, for four weeks during the public-school summer vacation. It is for children who do not attend a Catholic school through the regular school year.

Goal. The goal of the Confraternity is "Every Catholic child in a Catholic school"; yet while striving to attain this end, it aspires to instruct those deprived of the privilege.

Pupils. 1. Children in parishes without schools; 2. Children in sections of parishes remote from their schools; 3. Children who, though they are within reach of a Catholic school, for a variety of reasons do not attend.

Where Held. The place where the school will be held will depend upon local circumstances and the potential enrollment. The most practical place available should be used. It may be in rooms connected with the church or a nearby building. A school building is most desirable, for it provides separate classrooms, desks and blackboards. In many places, the public-school building can be obtained by



applying to the school board; non-Catholic groups have long used these buildings for their summer Bible schools. The school being public property, there is usually no expense in such cases except for janitor service. Where there is a parochial school, there is an advantage in using it, as public-school children thus learn about it at first hand. Statistics show that when a well-organized religious vacation school is held in a parochial school, invariably a number of pupils attending it enroll the following autumn at the parochial school.

Teachers. Except in far-flung missions, where seminarians do most effective work, two teaching Sisters are usually in charge of a vacation school. Seminarians teach in large centers also. Several lay teachers complete the staff in a well-organized school, conducting religious dramatization, picture study and project classes correlated with the Christian Doctrine taught by the Sisters or seminarians. If religious are not available, lay teachers teach Christian Doctrine under the supervision of the pastor. Where the number of lay teachers is in excess of local requirements, they may be asked to volunteer their services in missions where instructors are needed. Lay teachers are usually in charge of the recreation and project classes.

Grading. Children should be classified according to their school grade. When there is a great difference in religious backgrounds, older children will need special instruction and extra religious reading. A conscious effort should be made to bring each child's religious-education level up to that of his secular education. Grading and grade grouping should conform to the best educational standards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING THE RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOL

See the *Plan for Organizing Parish Units* of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The organization of the religious vacation school is preceded by the development of this plan. (Where no Confraternity is organized, this program may be adapted to local needs.)

Teachers — Religious. Application from pastors for teaching Sisters or seminarians who are within the diocese is made through the Diocesan Office. Where there is a preference for a Community, or for particular teachers, this is stated. When pastors apply to Communities outside the diocese, they are asked to notify the Diocesan Office of a favorable reply at once.

Preparation of Lay Teachers, Fishers, Helpers. A minimum of six classes will be held for the preparation of lay teachers, fishers (home visitors) and helpers before the opening of school. Weekly classes usually prove most satisfactory. See Confraternity *Instructions* for lay teachers, fishers and helpers, supplied by the Diocesan Office. Under the guidance of the pastor, the Chairman of Lay Teachers arranges for demonstration lessons. Where there are local Sisters, they often present these lessons. It is generally advisable to ask their assistance. The Chairmen of Fishers and Helpers arrange for meetings of their divisions and proceed according to the *Instructions*.

Teachers' Reference Library. A library of selected teachers' references should be built up for each school and additions made annually: Textbooks, projects and visual aids. The teachers become thoroughly familiar with the content and the most advantageous use of these materials at the demonstration lessons given for teachers. Numerous excellent textbooks are listed in the *Religious Va-*

cation School and School-Year Religious Instruction Manuals. A few well-selected materials permit effective work when teachers are prepared to use them to the best advantage. (The Diocesan Office usually supplies or lists materials adopted for use.)

CHAIRMEN WHO BEGIN FUNCTIONING ONE TO THREE MONTHS BEFORE SCHOOL OPENS

(These chairmen often select their own committees.)

Arrangements. To assist the Director and officers in preparing for the school, and provide for room and board for instructors not living where the school is held. Religious should be fittingly lodged and privacy and independence should be assured. Each locality works out its own plan, and arranges for the place where the school will be held. Generally, one of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine officers assumes this responsibility.

Finance. The treasurer is chairman of the finance committee. The expense of the vacation school should be borne by the local parish or mission, except in very poor missions. The committee plans for the raising of such funds.

Immediate use of funds: Textbooks and project supplies for pupils (these are usually paid for by the children), board and lodging for instructors, unless otherwise provided for.

Later use of funds: Offering for the Sisters or seminarians, usually five dollars a week besides room, board and transportation. Lay teachers generally contribute their services without remuneration.

CHAIRMEN WHO BEGIN FUNCTIONING A MONTH BEFORE SCHOOL OPENS

Publicity.

1. Present the plan to the Director, who supervises or approves all publicity. Newspaper articles — general information the first and second week, specific, the following two weeks.
2. Posters at church and public school.
3. Latter half of school session, invite parents to visit on a specific day. Announce closing exercises and exhibit.

Transportation. Members of this committee may be drawn from the enrolled helpers of the Confraternity. They request persons to volunteer the use of their cars one or more days a week for transportation of instructors or children living beyond walking distance of the school. Families living near one another in the country are requested each to arrange to bring all the children of the locality on alternate days, or every third or fourth day; often a truck is used and families pay the gas bill jointly. Plan in advance to assure daily attendance and lessen cost of gas and trips for drivers.

Properties. Have on hand before opening day: blackboard, chalk, erasers, paste, scissors, project materials (texts for instructors are usually procured when the Confraternity is organized); texts to be purchased by the children, religious articles to be used as awards. Submit list of articles to be ordered to the Confraternity president or Director for an OK, then to the secretary to order. State quantities needed — this will be determined by the home visitors' registration list for each class. *Order well in advance.*

Registration. To function on opening day. Where the school enrollment exceeds fifty, there should be five members on this committee so the work can be finished in a short time. The home visitors submit filled-in cards before the opening day. Additional enrollment blanks are usually supplied by the Diocesan Office. Instruct the committee as to methods several days before school opens so as to avoid duplication.

Closing Exercise and Exhibit. If possible, a Communion breakfast. A short program, to which the parents are invited. It may consist of dramatizations, songs, etc., learned during school. At the opening of school, request that all projects be retained until after they are exhibited at the closing exercises.

In very small communities, one person may be chairman of two or more committees, but there is an advantage in distributing duties in larger places: few are asked to expend much time and more persons are gaining an understanding of the work.

Confraternity presidents are asked to consider persons (men or women) for the foregoing chairmanships. Consult with the Director and request him to appoint the person he desires to fill each office.

A list of religious vacation-school materials to be supplied children in each grade will be sent from the Diocesan Office. Each child may be asked to pay for his materials and to bring his own pencil, scissors and paste, unless scissors and paste are supplied in the school.

The daily schedule is adapted to local circumstances. Where teachers are particularly qualified to present a special subject, departmental work is desirable. Time is saved and order maintained when teachers rotate and children

remain in the same classroom. The *Religious Vacation School Manuals* supply full information regarding courses of study for all grades, elementary and high school.

Suggested Daily Schedule

- 8:15 — Mass (See inexpensive Mass books listed in *Religious Vacation School Manuals*)
- 9:00 — Opening prayers and hymn
- 9:10 — Picture study and sacred stories
- 9:30 — Christian Doctrine
- 10:00 — Conduct and religious practice
- 10:10 — Recess with supervised recreation
- 10:30 — Singing
- 10:45 — Liturgy
- 11:00 — Project work
- 11:50 — Closing prayers
- 12:00 — Dismissal

For further information, write the Diocesan Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

Nihil obstat. Henry J. Zolzer, Censor librorum.

Imprimatur. † Thomas H. McLaughlin, Bishop of Paterson.

This and other literature issued by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Publications Department, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C., may be ordered direct from the St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson 3, N. J.

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