



GUIDELINES FOR PARISH EDUCATION COMMISSIONS

Diocese of Lansing

INTRODUCTION

Parish education commissions and boards of education for inter-parochial schools are an integral part of the Church in the Diocese of Lansing. Among the important reasons for their existence are:

1. To promote the concept of lay ministry

Participation in the ministry of Catholic education, whether in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs for all age levels (including adult education), or ministry to youth, is one way individuals can participate in the life of the Church in a significant way. This is the primary reason for having education commissions and school boards which provide concrete means for people to contribute to Catholic education and thereby build the kingdom of God.

2. To develop ownership and stability for the future

Participation in the life of an organization brings with it an increase of pride and ownership. People appreciate recognition of their expertise and are eager to offer their services as members of commissions and boards. Such bodies can, with well-developed plans and policies, provide stability when parish and program administrators are changed.

3. To offer financial advice

Given the financial difficulties that often face many parishes, the talents and interests of many people are needed to address the issue. It is no longer possible, nor is it desirable, for the administrator to shoulder the total responsibility for the life of the program. Neither should the pastor/pastoral coordinator feel that the financial challenges of the parish are his/hers alone. Administrators need assistance, and boards/commissions can be a positive force for dealing with the financial needs of today and planning for the future.

4. To develop and defend policy

Policies give general direction to administrators. They communicate what should be done, not how it should be done. Commission and board members have the responsibility to work with administrators in the development of policies and to defend local policies, as well as to ensure that diocesan policies are implemented at the local level.

5. To serve as a source for good public relations.

Involvement, information, and commitment will provide commission and board members with the opportunity to be positive voices on behalf of the Catholic school, parish religious education programs, and parish youth ministry programs which they represent.

6. To provide parents/guardians with a voice in their children's education

Parents, as the primary educators of their children, need a formal, systematic forum to participate in decisions affecting them.

7. To provide programs for adult parishioners

Adults in the parish need a body responsible for programs to meet their catechetical and educational needs.

8. To encourage strategic planning

Every parish/school needs a group charged with planning responsibilities. The parish education commission and inter-parochial school board should assume this responsibility with respect to religious education, the school, and youth ministry.