

Procedure for the Approval of Catechetical Materials in Catholic Education

The Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference is conscious of the ongoing need for high quality catechetical materials in Catholic schools and parish contexts. These materials ought to be both appropriate for their context and correct in matters of faith and doctrine. The Council for Catechetics is therefore pleased to announce the establishment of an Episcopal review body that will (i) evaluate catechetical materials intended for use at national level from an educational, catechetical, liturgical, theological and scriptural standpoint and (ii) provide a report on the suitability of such materials for use in Catholic Schools and parishes. This suggestion does not bypass the role of the local ordinary as the chief catechist in his Diocese but accepts that in the case of resources to be used at national level, approval comes from the Irish Episcopal Conference.

Criteria:

Together with the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the norm for accuracy and precision of Catholic doctrine. The relevant syllabus or curriculum (with Guidelines and Directories) then provide the outline of the content that should be covered in catechetical materials. These include, but are not limited to:

- *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (Draft, 2013)*
- *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students (2006)*
- *General Directory for Catechesis (1997)*
- *National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland: Share the Good News (2011)*

Therefore, whether or not a lesson in a submitted textbook or other material is a correct and exact account of authentic Catholic teaching will be judged in reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the documents of the Second Vatican Council. On the other hand, whether the treatment of a particular topic or subject in the submitted material is doctrinally adequate and pedagogically appropriate for the educational context or student age will be decided in reference to the relevant official syllabus, curriculum or guidelines and the General and National Directories for Catechesis.

The suitability and approval process leads to a judgement of either suitability or non-suitability with the above criteria. Items judged to be suitable will appear on a suitability list posted on the website of the Council for Catechetics. This will be updated regularly.

Applicability:

A text/series will be eligible for review if it falls into one of the following categories:

- A religious education textbook or series for students in Catholic primary and post-primary schools
- A religious education textbook or series for Catholic students in parish Religious Education programmes
- Teacher manuals or catechist manuals designed to accompany any of the above (A review of such manuals must be accompanied by the relevant student materials)
- Any other catechetical material proposed for use in Catholic primary or post-primary schools, or as part of parish Religious Education programmes

Procedure:

- A panel of persons appropriately qualified in the areas of education, catechetics, liturgy, theology and scripture will be compiled by the National Director for Catechesis. These persons will be drawn upon on an ad-hoc basis to (i) assess textbooks, series and materials relevant to their area of expertise and (ii) provide a report on the suitability of such materials to the National Director for Catechetics. The composition of the review body for a particular textbook, series or set of materials will be kept confidential.
- The National Director will compile the reports given by the individual reviewers into one document, and will send it to the Episcopal review body, which will be composed of a minimum of three Bishops. Based on the recommendations given by the panel of experts, as well as their own opinion, the Episcopal review body will make a judgement of either suitability or non-suitability.
- This judgement will be considered confidential, and will be given only to the publisher of the text, series or materials, who will have the opportunity to respond and to make changes, as required. The text, series or materials may then be resubmitted to the review body

The composition of the panel of reviewers will be decided by the Episcopal review body in consultation with the National Director for Catechetics.