Revitalizing Sacramental Ministry
A Framework for Parishes

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Archdiocese of Cincinnati
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I. Introduction

In an effort to meet the needs of Catholics today and to respond with a new ardor to the challenges of our times, the Sacramental Ministry Committee (a sub-committee of the Worship Commission) has developed a framework for sacramental ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. This framework outlines an approach to sacramental ministry that is designed to engage those seeking the sacraments in a process inspired by the New Evangelization and by our approach to those who come to the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). This approach strives to welcome and invite Catholics seeking the sacraments into a deeper relationship with Christ and the worshiping community, forming them as disciples of Christ, ultimately sending them back into the world to give witness to Christ Jesus. This framework recognizes and honors the needs of the family to follow Christ in their home and daily living as the domestic church. It responds to the cultural realities of our time and is meant to inspire new approaches to sacramental ministry in our local Church today. This framework focuses primarily on sacramental ministry with couples seeking marriage, parents and guardians seeking Baptism for their children, and candidates for Confirmation. It may also be adapted for candidates for First Penance and First Communion and their families. It is open to adaptation according to the resources and needs of each parish.

II. Foundations

Church leaders all over the world recognize the need for reinvigorating the faith of many Catholics today. This is called the New Evangelization. The 2012 Synod of Bishops focused on the New Evangelization and provided the Church with rich food for thought in their synodal preparatory document and the follow-up propositions that outline the outcomes of the 2012 Synod. Additionally, the USCCB document, Disciples Called to Witness: the New Evangelization also seeks to address the signs of the times and meet the challenges of our day. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is seeking to follow their lead and do the same.

The General Directory for Catechesis and the National Directory for Catechesis, as well as the two 2012 synodal documents point to the baptismal catechumenate as the model for all catechesis, especially in sacramental ministry. (See Appendix I for further exploration of the documentation.) These documents, along with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Disciples Called to Witness, form the foundation for developing a framework for sacramental ministry that is both evangelizing and catechumenal in its approach.
Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Suggestion: Review the full documentation in Appendix I (pp. 16 –19), then discuss the following questions:

1. How are the principles highlighted in these documents reflected in your current sacramental ministry? How might your sacramental ministry develop to better align with these principles?
2. Since the Church names the baptismal catechumenate as the model for all catechesis, what are the implications of this for catechesis accompanying the sacraments of Matrimony, Baptism, and Confirmation?
3. What are 2-3 practical things your parish can do to further model its sacramental ministry on the baptismal catechumenate?

III. Proposal

This document outlines a framework for accomplishing sacramental ministry in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

We propose that:

- parish sacramental ministry become an essential component of evangelization and witness;
- all parish sacramental ministry is characterized by an evangelizing catechesis modeled on the baptismal catechumenate which takes place within the community - both the domestic church (family) and the parish community;
- we begin by focusing on Baptism of Children (Infants), Confirmation, and Marriage; and
- we invite interested parishes to pilot this framework.
IV. Sacramental Ministry Objectives

A) To provide an encounter with Christ through human experience, sacramental signs that appeal to the human senses, parish ministry and outreach to those seeking the sacraments.

B) To lead them to an initial conversion and an awareness of the spiritual journey as a lifelong process of conversion.

C) To provide the domestic church (the family) the opportunity to fully participate in the process of formation.

D) To engage those seeking the sacraments in the life of the parish community.

E) To provide those seeking the sacraments with the opportunity to grow in knowledge of Christ, the Church, and her teachings through a broad spectrum of formational experiences.

F) To invite and encourage them in a life of prayer that takes place in the midst of the parish community and at home.

G) To walk with and apprentice them on the path of discipleship – life of service and outreach to the poor and most vulnerable.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

For discussion questions go to Appendix II, pp. 19 – 21.
V. A Vision for Sacramental Ministry

This framework provides parishes with the opportunity to imagine new approaches to sacramental ministry. It requires two simultaneous and ongoing efforts:

- formation of those seeking to participate in the sacramental life of the Church through a process modeled on the baptismal catechumenate (RCIA), and
- forming the community of faith in a greater awareness of their role and identity as persons of welcome, evangelizers, and witnesses of the faith.

A. Framework for those seeking the Sacraments

1. Dynamics of the baptismal catechumenate include:
   a. A process that recognizes and begins where the candidate(s) are in their stage of life and spiritual formation
   b. A process that is part of an ongoing spiritual journey of conversion guided by the grace of God
   c. A process that builds relationships – spiritual and personal – and apprentices those seeking the sacraments on the spiritual journey of life
   d. A process that allows for the free cooperation of the individual(s)
   e. A process that provides a “suitable catechesis” (RCIA, 75.1) which is “a fruitful blend of instruction and formation in faith.” (GDC, no. 91, NDC, p. 116)
   f. A process that involves the community: priests and deacons, catechists, sponsors/mentors, small sacramental faith communities, the domestic church (family), the entire parish community
   g. A process that is ongoing: preparing for, celebrating, and reflecting upon sacramental moments is lifelong. In other words, the sacraments are experienced lifelong and are connected to daily living.
   h. A process that is mission oriented and focuses on forming disciples for living in the world.
   i. A process that allows for the adaptation of these dynamics to the particular and cultural situation.
Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Considering your sacramental ministry through the perspectives of the dynamics above, what are your current strengths and areas of needed development?

2. How might these dynamics be better integrated into the sacramental ministry of your parish, especially Matrimony, Infant Baptism, and Confirmation?

3. How can our domestic churches of the home, including parents and families, be included, engaged in, and central to our sacramental ministry?

4. What are 2 – 3 practical steps your parish might take to better integrate these dynamics?

2. Formation includes the following components:

   a. Initial meetings and reaching out
      i. With the first contact, the parish begins to walk with those seeking the sacraments. We do not put them on hold until the next “class.” Rather, we meet with them immediately and begin to connect them to life in Christ within the parish community and within their own domestic church (family)

      ii. Connect them with others who are walking on the same journey, possibly in the context of small Christian communities led by mentors, sponsor families, or sponsor couples.

      iii. Create an environment of hospitality and trust by providing respectful dialogue, confidentiality, and an openness to questions and concerns. (CDW)

      iv. Assist them with awakening to their spiritual hungers, perhaps in the context of their small Christian community and within their own domestic church (family)

      v. Provide opportunities for building relationships with mentors/sponsor couples/families; engage the candidate(s) in a deeper relationship with Christ and the community by journeying with them in a life of prayer (or deeper life of prayer)

      vi. Provide them with experiences of hospitality and life in the parish community

      vii. Lead them to an experience of initial conversion and recognition of ongoing conversion as part of the spiritual life.
b. Celebration of a rite(s) that makes holy the particular period/moment leading up to the sacramental celebration.
   i. Usually taken from the Book of Blessings or Book of Household Blessings (i.e. blessing of engaged couples, blessing of child within the womb, blessing of parents before childbirth, etc.)
   ii. May be celebrated within a small group or in the parish Sunday celebration

c. Remote preparation (months ahead of the celebration of the sacrament, beginning with the first contact with the parish)
   i. Provide appropriate formation/catechesis on life issues important to them at their stage of life (engagement/Marriage, pregnancy/adoption/Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation).
      1. Appropriate formation/catechesis is provided in many forms:
         electronic, handouts, articles, speakers, adult formation programs, sponsors, small faith communities
   ii. Provide spiritual formation through their mentors/sponsor couples/families: small groups forming a type of small Christian community – based on hospitality, prayer, faith sharing, formation and activities leading to greater discipleship
   iii. Provide for spiritual support and training within the context of their domestic church (family)
   iv. When the time is appropriate, provide suitable formation/catechesis on Church teachings that align with particular stage in life.
   v. Continued participation in the liturgy, especially Sunday Mass
   vi. Involvement/apprenticeship in a life of discipleship such as, serving the needs of the poor, the alienated, the elderly, immigrants, the sick, and the disabled.

d. Proximate/intense preparation (within months of the celebration of the sacrament)
   i. More specific preparation for the sacrament using some of the liturgical texts as foundation and content for formation
   ii. More intense preparation – spiritual, emotional, intellectual
   iii. Preparation for the celebration of the sacramental rite/liturgy

e. Celebration of the Sacrament
   i. Within the context of the parish community
   ii. Full use of sign and symbol
   iii. A liturgy celebrated well: music, preaching, proclamation, hospitality, spirit-filled

f. Mystagogy (post-sacramental reflection) and ongoing connections
i. Happens within the parish community, small sacramental communities, and even at home – members of the faithful as agents of faith;
ii. Reflects on the experience of the sacrament celebrated and deepens the experience of the sacrament making connections between liturgy and life;
iii. Reflects on signs and symbols and their power, making connections between liturgy and life.
iv. Is ongoing: the parish continues to walk with them on their journey of faith through continued connections with sponsor families/couples; small sacramental faith communities; and within the context of their own domestic church (family).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How might your parish sacramental ministry better attend to hospitality, initial conversion and ongoing conversion?
2. How might your sacramental ministry actively engage parents, families and domestic churches of the home?
3. How might your parish organize its sacramental ministry so as to better prepare people for lifelong discipleship, including preparation and ongoing mystagogy, and provide for meaningful connection with the life of the faith community? What should be your practical next steps? What obstacles do you anticipate, and how might you best address them?
4. What assistance and/or additional resources will you need?
B. Engaging the Parish Community

1. Forming the parish community in their role and identity
   a. The community understands itself as a people baptized into a community of believers who live as members of the one Body of Christ and realize that by being members of the community of faith they are connected to those celebrating the sacraments.

   b. The community understands themselves as agents of evangelization and faith – they proclaim the Good News with their very lives by word and example.

   c. They recognize and understand that being teachers and proclaimers of the faith is the responsibility of all the baptized (RCIA, 9; NE, 92 & 105)

   d. They see themselves as people of welcome, reaching out to the stranger, the lonely, the elderly, the sick, the lost who are in their midst as well as to people celebrating the sacraments.

2. Formation of the parish community includes:
   a. Using teachable moments when Catholics come in contact with the Church such as Christmas, Easter, sacramental celebrations as important opportunities for catechesis and evangelization.

   b. Liturgical ministers who see themselves as people of welcome and hospitality.

   c. Preaching that forms the community in its identity and unfolds the meaning of the sacraments.

   d. The faithful participate in the sacramental rites, not as mere observers, but with the clergy as an act of the Church.

   e. Making apparent an encounter with the presence of Christ in Word, Eucharist, Minister, Assembly (CSL, 7).

   f. Celebration of the rite whereby the faithful recognize their responsibility to uphold each other by prayer and example

   g. Worthy symbols and actions that are carried out in such a way that they in and of themselves form the assembly.
h. Presiders and deacons who realize their role in leading the community in prayer and the formative nature of their presidential leadership.

i. Participation of the faithful in worship – both external and internal – that shapes a vibrant worshiping community who is a clear sign of faith and instrument of God’s grace in the world.

j. Use of worship aids or very brief invitations or introductory remarks that form the assembly in their role and identity.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How does the Sunday parish assembly understand itself as an evangelizing community?

2. What are some ways of creating a more hospitable, welcoming environment in your parish?

C. Other Considerations

1. Role of Mystagogy (post-sacramental reflection) and ongoing connections

   a. We can only explain to a certain degree the meaning and power of a sacrament. The deeper meaning is found through the experience of the sacrament and reflection upon its impact on those seeking and celebrating the sacrament.
   
   b. Symbols used well will provide an experience of the mystery upon which to reflect.

2. Ongoing Connections

   a. Members of the community need opportunities for mystagogy:
      
      i. Help people to make connections between lived experience and the sacraments.
      
      ii. Create times when this would be most valuable and best received.
      
      iii. Make use of teachable moments.
      
      iv. Seek natural opportunities to bring people together to share faith.
v. Help some members of the faithful to learn how to be mystagogues – leading others in deepening their awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the sacraments.

b. Analogy: We can explain to a husband and wife in great detail the experience of pregnancy, birth and parenting, but only after the pregnancy, birth, and early weeks of parenting will new parents realize in full measure the implications of becoming parents. After the experience of pregnancy and giving birth, new parents will need the opportunity to continue to reflect on this experience and on the implications and responsibilities of parenthood – reflecting on the mystery of birth and new life and the meaning of baptism in that context can only happen after the experience. Mystagogy will deepen the experience and provide the Christian lens by which to view the experience.

VI. Pilot Parishes/Pastoral Regions

A. Goal of Pilot Parish/Regional Consultation
1. To inspire new approaches to sacramental ministry in the parish/region that responds to the diverse range of pastoral, spiritual, and cultural experiences of those seeking the sacraments.
2. To equip the parish/region in reinvigorating sacramental ministry by engaging those seeking the sacraments in a process inspired by the baptismal catechumenate in the light of the New Evangelization.
3. To provide sacramental ministry that welcomes and invites Catholics seeking the sacraments into a deeper relationship with Christ and the worshiping community, ultimately sending them back into the world as disciples of Christ Jesus.
4. To equip the parish/region with tools to succeed in bringing about transformative change in parish/regional sacramental ministry.
5. To build collaborative relationships between parish/regional staffs and Archdiocesan staff.
6. To identify best practices in sacramental ministry.

B. Expectations of the Parish/Regional Team
1. To form a parish/regional team that includes, but is not limited to the pastor, DRE/CRE and/or pastoral associate, music minister, and parents committed to reinvigorating marriage, baptismal or confirmation
sacramental ministry. (Reinvigorating the sacrament of First Communion or First Reconciliation will be considered.)

2. To attend consultation meetings and engage in honest and challenging conversations identifying possibilities for sacramental ministry according to the framework and given the unique strengths, resources and obstacles of the local community.

3. To identify a local contact person who arranges for and convenes consultation meetings.

4. To complete strategies and honor deadlines.

5. To engage in meaningful evaluation of the process.

6. To share the “sacramental ministry consultation” process as well as best practices and stumbling blocks to promote reinvigorating sacramental ministry to other parishes/regions in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

7. To participate in the process for a minimum of eighteen months.

C. Expectations of the AOC Sacramental Ministry Team

1. To form an interdisciplinary consulting team that includes, but is not limited to persons skilled in catechesis, family perspectives, liturgy, intercultural competence, and parish life.

2. To attend consultation meetings and engage in honest and challenging conversations identifying possibilities for sacramental ministry according to the expressed strengths, resources and obstacles of the local community.

3. To identify an Archdiocesan team leader who is the liaison to the parish/pastoral region sacramental ministry team.

4. To support the development of strategies and deadlines, assisting with needed resources as is appropriate. To share what is learned about sacramental ministry consultations, best practices and stumbling blocks with other parishes/regions so as to promote reinvigorating sacramental ministry throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

VII. Conclusion
This framework is simply that, a framework. It acknowledges the diversity of parishes in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the various human and financial resources available. It is a living document that will grow with experience. Pilot parishes are encouraged to keep careful notes on the process, identifying the successes and challenges in implementation and communicating recommendations for additional steps and changes to the framework.

The journey to revitalizing sacramental ministry is an important step in evangelization and growing vibrant communities of faith. We do this work not as individuals, but as a community of disciples proclaiming the Good News. May the concluding words of the *lineamenta*/working document of the 2012 Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization inspire us as we look forward to embarking on this journey together:

> And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes in anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world! (NE, 169)

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APPENDIX I: Documentation

From the Lineamenta/Instrumentum laboris for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization:

The Christian faith is not simply teachings, wise sayings, a code of morality or a tradition. The Christian faith is a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. (18)

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (18)

Transmitting the faith is not the work of one individual only, but instead, is the responsibility of every Christian... (92)

The best place to transmit the faith is a community nourished and transformed by the liturgical life and prayer. (97)

Transmission of the faith involves the whole community... (105 & 107)

From the Propositions of the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization:

Regarding Adult Catechesis: One cannot speak of the New Evangelization if the catechesis of adults is non-existent, fragmented, weak or neglected... The phases and levels of the catechumenate of the Church show how biblically, catechetically, spiritually and liturgically a person’s history and faith-journey can be understood as a vocation through a relationship with God (cf. Evangelii nuntiandi, 18; Instrumentum laboris, 92). In all these things, the public character of the decision of faith which the catechumen makes, which gradually grows in the community and the diocese, has a positive impact on all the faithful. (28)

Regarding Christian Initiation and the New Evangelization: The Synod wishes to state that Christian initiation is a crucial element in the New Evangelization and is the means by which the Church, as a mother, brings forth children and regenerates herself. Therefore, we propose that the traditional process of Christian initiation, that has often become simply a proximate preparation for the sacraments, be everywhere considered in a catechumenal perspective, giving more relevance to permanent mystagogy, and thus becoming true initiation to Christian life through the sacraments. (38)

From Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization (USCCB)

Currently there are numerous pastoral programs meant to encourage and support people in their journey back to the faith. However, for these programs to be effective, bishops, eparchs, pastors, catechists, and indeed all Catholics reaching out to our missing brothers and sisters must touch the lives of others, interact with them, and show them how the faith answers the deepest questions and enriches modern culture. Many
might ask, “How do I touch people’s lives? How do I interact with others in a spirit of love? How do I explain how the faith addresses modern concerns?” The Church has the resources to help. One such resource involves cultivating a culture of witness. (9)

The witness of Christians, whose lives are filled with the hope of Christ, opens the hearts and minds of those around them to Christ. This openness to Christ is a moment of conversion (metanoia). It is the moment in which a person’s life is reoriented to Christ, when he or she—by grace—enters into a relationship with him and thus enters into a relationship with the community of believers, the Church. “The purpose of this [new] evangelization is to bring about faith and conversion to Christ. Faith involves a profound change of mind and heart, a change of life, a ‘metanoia.’” (10)

Discipleship is rooted in human experience. It is through human experience that one enters into a dialogue with modern culture. The human experience provides the “sensible signs” that help us come to know ourselves, one another, and God. (49) It is through common human experiences that the Word of God is revealed to us. These sensible signs are not abstract metaphysical signs but the concrete actions of the Holy Spirit present in the Christian’s everyday life. (13)

From the General Directory for Catechesis:

The model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate... This catechumenal formation should inspire the other forms of catechesis in both their objectives and dynamism. (59)

... initiatory catechesis, being comprehensive and systematic, cannot be reduced to the circumstantial or the occasional. As it is formation for the Christian life it comprises but surpasses mere instruction... this inherent richness in the Catechumenate of non-baptized adults should serve to inspire other forms of catechesis. (66)

From the National Directory for Catechesis

The baptismal catechumenate is the source of inspiration for all catechesis... While a distinction is made between catechumens and those already baptized who are being catechized, some elements of the baptismal catechumenate are instructive for the post-baptismal catechesis. In that sense, the baptismal catechumenate inspires a continuing catechesis. It reminds the Church that her catechesis accompanies a continued conversion to Christ and an ongoing initiation into the celebration of the sacraments and the life of the Church. (p. 116)

Just as the baptismal catechumenate is the responsibility of all the entire Christian community, so too does the whole Church bear the obligation to provide ongoing catechesis for the faithful... All catechesis should provide those being catechized with the opportunity to journey with Christ through the stages of his Paschal Mystery. The
baptismal catechumenate is where the Gospel message deliberately engages the culture of the catechumens. (p. 116)

_Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum educationis_

Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among children. Hence, the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs. (3)

_On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, Familiaris consortio_

Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, become what you are. (17)

In addition to these characteristics, it cannot be forgotten that the most basic element, so basic that it qualifies the educational role of parents, is parental love, which finds fulfillment in the task of education as it completes and perfects its service of life: as well as being a source, the parents’ love is also the animating principle and therefore the norm inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity, enriching it with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love. (39)

No plan for organized pastoral work, at any level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family. (17)

_Quotes on Family Life_

Every home is called to become a ‘domestic church’ in which family life is completely centered on the lordship of Christ and the love of husband and wife mirrors the mystery of Christ’s love for the Church, his bride.

—Pope Benedict XVI, February 7, 2007, general audience remarks

Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family — a domestic church.

—Pope John Paul II

...the strength for encountering Jesus “is in the family, in mom and dad.”

—Pope Francis (as Cardinal at a celebration of First Communion)
From the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:

The rite of Christian initiation presented here is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. (1)

The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. (4)

By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens obey the Holy Spirit more generously. (4)

The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God’s grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the actions of the Church and the circumstances of time and place. (5)

...initiation is the responsibility of all the baptized.

- The community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ
- All the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities

Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and catechumens throughout the process of initiation.” (9)
APPENDIX II: Further Exploration of the Sacramental Ministry Objectives

Parish staffs and sacramental ministry teams may want to reflect on and be guided by the following questions:

A) To provide an encounter with Christ through human experience, sacramental signs that appeal to the senses, parish ministry and outreach to those seeking the sacraments.

- How does every person who asks for the sacraments encounter the Risen Christ in the context of parish and family life?
- How does sacramental ministry lead people to recognize Christ in human relationship and in the world?
- How does the liturgy, through sacramental signs, provide an encounter with the living Christ?
- How do those seeking the sacraments experience Christ present through staff and pastoral ministers from the first phone call or first meeting?
- How does sacramental ministry evangelize and lead to a life transformed, to a deeper relationship with Christ?
- How does contact with parish staff and pastoral ministers lead to an ongoing relationship with the parish community?

B) To lead them to an initial conversion and an awareness of the spiritual journey as a lifelong process of conversion.

- How does parish sacramental ministry invite persons seeking the sacraments to a reflective life that enables them to live their life through the lens of the Gospel?
- How does parish sacramental ministry invite those seeking the sacraments to a life of conversion, turning from sin toward a life lived in and through Christ Jesus?
- How does sacramental ministry encourage and support those seeking the sacraments to enter an ongoing spiritual journey of faith?
- How does the parish community recognize itself as being on a spiritual journey of faith?

C) To provide the domestic church (the family) the opportunity to participate fully in the process of formation.

- What tools does the parish provide for families to interact and learn together?
- How is technology a source of formation for families?
- How do small Christian communities support families in the process of ongoing relationships with members of the community; ongoing spiritual formation; ongoing mystagogy?
• How do these opportunities respect and support the various dimensions or diversity of family life?
• How does the parish respect and cultivate diverse cultural traditions and practices of families.

D) To engage those seeking the sacraments in the life of the parish community.

How do members of the community recognize their role as mentors on the journey of faith?
How do we provide for mentors/sponsors to apprentice them on the journey of faith perhaps in the context of small Christian communities?
How do we invite those seeking the sacraments into a deeper participation in the communal life?

E) To provide those seeking the sacraments with the opportunity to grow in knowledge of Christ, the Church, and her teachings through a broad spectrum of formational experiences.

• How does sacramental catechesis reflect an apprenticeship model: learn by doing?
• How does sacramental catechesis connect lived experience with Scripture and Tradition?
• How does sacramental catechesis provide for opportunities of family formation?
• How does sacramental catechesis present the Good News of the Risen Christ who is the source of hope and joy for those seeking the sacraments?
• How does sacramental catechesis present the teachings of the Church, founded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that continues to evangelize and bring people to deeper faith?
• How is sacramental catechesis grounded in Scripture?
• How does sacramental catechesis form people in the Tradition and teachings of the Church?

F) To invite and encourage them in a life of prayer that takes place in the midst of the community of faith and at home.

• How does the liturgy itself encourage the full, conscious, and active participation of the people?
• How do they come to a fuller understanding of the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life?
• What rites do we celebrate to mark steps on life’s journey?
• How does the community of faith walk with and help those in sacramental formation?
• How do we support the prayer life of families and individuals?
• How do we teach them (apprentice them) to pray?
G) To walk with and apprentice them on the path of discipleship:

- How do we invite those seeking the sacraments into a life of discipleship, apostolic mission?
- How do we include them and apprentice them in the social action of the parish community?
- How do we invite them to live a life of discipleship in the workplace, at home, in the malls, or wherever they find themselves in life?
Appendix III: Mission and Vision Statements of the Archdiocesan Sacramental Ministry Committee

Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Sacramental Ministry Committee
January, 2013

Vision Statement

Sacramental life in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati inspires people to...

• know God’s presence in everyday life,
• encounter Christ in the sacraments, and
• serve God in our graced-filled, yet broken world.

Mission Statement

To envision and establish increasingly vibrant and transformative sacramental ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Guiding Principles

1) All sacramental formation is catechumenal: it is a spiritual journey of conversion, based on God’s grace and the free cooperation of the individual. It invites the individual to connect one’s lived experience with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through catechesis, community, liturgy, and apostolic service.

2) The impact of culture and diversity is of primary concern: technology, cultural diversity, diversity of families, secularism, and consumerism require a change in approach to sacramental ministry.

3) The sacramental principle, namely, that God is encountered through signs perceptible to the human senses, including ordinary events, is integral to the relationship between the celebration of the sacraments and living the sacraments.

4) Evangelization and hospitality at all levels of parish life are necessary components of sacramental ministry.

5) Sacraments are key moments in the lives of the people of God. They engage and lead the faithful to ongoing spiritual growth, involvement in the life of faith, and service to the wider community.
6) A family perspective, in all its diversity, is vital to sacramental ministry.

7) The celebration of the Eucharist – source and summit of Christian life – is at the center of the Church’s sacramental life, the goal towards which all other sacraments, devotions, and sacramentals are oriented.

**Strategic Goals**

1. To motivate and energize our diverse Church for sacramental renewal.

2. To envision and establish approaches to and models of sacramental ministry that are vibrant, seamless, catechumenal, transformative and responsive to the signs of the times and the current secularized culture.

3. To deepen the faithful’s participation in the Eucharist, the goal toward which all sacraments are oriented, in order “to give their lives an authentically Eucharistic orientation.” (cf. NE, 137; SC, 75)

4. To equip and engage Church leaders for vibrant and transformative sacramental ministry.
   a. Develop short term and long term plans
   b. Assess resources and best practices
   c. Assess ministry formation