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## Curriculum

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place in religious education for children and adults during the last 10 to 15 years, according to several diocesan experts.

Mary Britton, diocesan catechetical consultant, pointed out that even just a decade ago, for example, most parishes either offered religious education in a Catholic school, or religious education that paralleled the school's grade-level instruction.

"The children would come in for religious education after school, in the evenings or on Saturday mornings," Britton said.

Although several parishes still use such a model, a growing number of

parishes are developing alternative models of catechetical formation, she noted.

"I think that what we are aware of now is that no one model meets the needs of all in a parish community," Britton commented.

Some parishes, involve the entire family in catechetical formation, explained Karen M. Rinefierd, consultant to the diocese on family perspectives in ministry.

Rinefierd remarked that a number of parishes now offer catechetical programs in which groups of families meet regularly to discuss such subjects as the Scripture readings heard at Sunday Mass.

The key to these programs is enriching the adults' faith so that they are able to enrich the children's faith, she said. She added that inter-generational cate-

chesis can appeal to everyone from single parents unable to bring their children to weekday classes to parents who have left the church and come back to it through sharing their children's faith formation.

"You don't have a disinterested parent dropping the kids off for class," Rinefierd remarked.

Despite its emphasis on a broad-based approach to catechetical formation, the document does contain supplemental sections for use by Catholic-school religion teachers, according to Evelyn Kirst, former diocesan assistant superintendent for curriculum and testing.

"The schools have (daily) formal religion classes..." said Kirst, who is now principal of Our Lady of Mercy High School in Brighton. "We still wanted to provide Catholic-school teachers with

very specific activities for their kids."

Such activities might include having Catholic-school students interview various parish volunteers or employees, noted Elizabeth Berliner, principal of Elmira's Holy Family Junior High and author of the supplement for grades six, seven and eight.

"For that age group, interviews are wonderful because it brings them in touch with people who are serving the church," Berliner said. "These are people they'll know (for years)."

In the end, the new curriculum will recognize that catechists need room for a variety of creative approaches toward teaching, the experts agreed.

"We've built in a lot of flexibility," Britton said of the new curriculum. "We recognize that there will be a lot of changes in the future."

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