



**THE BISHOP OF LEEDS**  
The Right Reverend Marcus Stock

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[www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk](http://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

**For the attention of Catechists in the Diocese of Leeds**

24<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dear Catechist

**Sacramental Preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation and the future strategic provision of Youth Services**

I hope that you will have heard today, from my Pastoral Letter read in your parish, about the changes that will be taking place in the diocese regarding Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and the future strategic provision of Youth Services within the Diocese of Leeds. I am aware that these changes may well affect aspects of your ministry as a catechist. It is for this reason that I am writing to you.

The ministry of catechesis is essential to the life of the parish community. "It is the task of catechesis to show who Jesus Christ is, his life and ministry, and to present the Christian faith as the following of his person" (*General Directory for Catechesis* 41). Catechists journey in faith with children, young people and adults for a certain time and on behalf of the wider parish community. This role requires commitment and formation and a life that is rooted in prayer.

I would like to thank you for all that you have done and are doing to prepare our children and young people for the sacraments and I would like to ask you to continue this ministry in the light of the changes that will be taking place. Please do all you can to encourage new members to consider training or becoming catechists for your parish and deanery.

Further information and details of the timetable as to how these changes will be implemented will be published by the Vicariate for Education but below is a summary of the main changes:

- In Year 3 (ages 7-8) - Catechesis and preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrated in Lent.
- In Year 4 (ages 8-9) - Catechesis and preparation for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion and celebrated during the summer term.
- In Year 5 (ages 9-10) - Catechesis and preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- In Year 6 (ages 10-11) - Catechesis and preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation which will be celebrated in the autumn and spring terms.

The changes (above) will take effect in the academic year 2017-18 and are detailed in the guidance and information available on the diocesan website or from your parish priest.

For the coming year (2016-17) the preparation for and celebration of First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation will remain the same apart from one change. Young people in Year 9 will prepare for Confirmation in order to receive the sacrament in the summer of 2017 and will be joined by young people in Year 8 who will also prepare for Confirmation at the same time.

It is envisaged that catechists will continue to use the same sacramental programmes and resources for 2016-17 with new age-appropriate resources identified for later years.

During the coming year there will be a number of practical ways in which support will be given to both new and experienced catechists. In the meantime if you have any queries please contact:

Fr Timothy Swinglehurst, Episcopal Vicar for Education  
Email: [timothy.swinglehurst@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:timothy.swinglehurst@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

Linda Pennington, Co-ordinator for Catechesis  
Email: [linda.pennington@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:linda.pennington@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

Once again, I wish to avail myself of this occasion to express to you my sincere thanks for all that you do to support the ministry of catechesis the Diocese of Leeds.

Assuring you of my prayers and very best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Marcus Stock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a cross symbol at the beginning.

✠ Marcus Stock  
Bishop of Leeds