

5. Catechist Preparation Session

Each session with persons with disabilities shall be preceded by a catechist preparation session.

An adult community of believers gathers together to renew its own appreciation in the faith of the mystery to be celebrated in the session with the total community. United in their experience of faith, through a symbolic method, they form a warm, welcoming community. Catechist preparation sessions take place on a day or evening other than that for the session with persons with disabilities. The session closes with the sharing of food.

Helper catechists (sponsors) make up the majority of the adult group. The helper is primarily a friend of a person with disabilities.

6. Liturgy - Worship

Liturgical experiences with specialized groups shall take place from time to time but inclusion into assemblies of worship in the local parish or church is to be fostered.

7. Area Coordination

There shall be coordination between centers in a given area.

Chairpersons gather annually to share and plan for growth and expansion of Spred ministry.



SPRED

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT
Archdiocese of Chicago

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Spred is a network of services provided through the leadership of the Special Religious Development Agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.

150 parish centers serve children, adolescents and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other learning challenges in the Archdiocese. Through a contract with the State of Illinois, Spred serves the residents of a state facility.

The Chicago Spred communities also prepare and support Spred communities of faith in Oakland CA, Joliet IL, Rockford IL, Indianapolis IN, Worcester MA, Portland ME, Saginaw MI, Kansas City-St. Joseph MO, Charlotte NC, Scranton PA, Providence RI, Arlington VA and Milwaukee WI as well as Perth and Toowoomba Australia, Shrewsbury England, Belfast, Derry, Armagh N. Ireland; Dublin Ireland, Mexico City Mexico, Edinburgh, Galloway, Glasgow, Motherwell and Paisley Scotland, Malta, Johannesburg and Cape Town South Africa.

Spred sets up a contractual arrangement with a parish, a facility or another diocese. Spred binds itself to provide training, and materials in the form of private manuscripts. The other party sets up a program for a given group of persons that meets Spred standards.

Each center has a core team and helpers. The core team is made up of a parish or church representative, a leader and an activity catechist. There is a helper/sponsor for each person with disabilities in a center.

SPRED STANDARDS

1. Availability

Religious services shall be available to the person with developmental disabilities

Usually the person with disabilities who enters a Spred group has membership in a parish or church. By sponsoring a Spred group the parish or church makes religious services available. The parish or church indicates its sponsorship by appointing a chairperson.

The work of the chairperson is to locate persons with disabilities in the parish, locate workers to join the group, see to it that they get trained and arrange for the use of appropriate space.

Through a chairperson Spred services become available to the person with disabilities.

2. Preparation for Catechesis

There shall be a preparation phase to each session with persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities or other learning challenges.

The person with disabilities is welcomed as a guest as soon as he or she arrives. The prepared environment fosters a sense of belonging, well-being and concentration. The activity catechist assumes responsibility for the over all preparation phase.

3. Catechesis with persons with Disabilities

There shall be a symbolic catechesis appropriate to the age, mentality and faith development of the group.

The leader catechist assumes responsibility for the catechesis given. A prepared environment and the attitude of the adults foster a sense of the sacred, prayerful awareness and an attitude of celebration in a community of faith.

4. Closure

The session shall be brought to a gradual conclusion through the sharing of food.

Sharing of food in an atmosphere of the sacred has significance. A well prepared table involving everyone's contribution is a shared gift. Flowers, candles, attractive table coverings, quality tableware, dishes, etc. form the elements that convey respect, trust, affection. Music expresses and deepens the group's happiness in becoming a community of faith.

With the coordination of the activity catechist, all members participate in the preparation, sharing of food and cleaning up. The good-byes are to be respectful and personal.