

# **Catholic Mutual... "CARES"**

## **FIRE EXIT DRILLS: A MUST FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES**

Schools are required by the National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Codes (NFPA) to conduct 10 fire drills throughout the school year. What about classroom situations that are not under such a strict requirement? Fires can occur at any time and at any place. The lesson to be learned is the importance of repeated fire drills and insuring that all students and instructors using the buildings are involved.

Many parishes use volunteers to teach religious education classes. It is imperative that these volunteers are instructed in the proper procedures to be followed should an emergency or fire occur. They should be familiar with all exits from the building (which should be visible by means of a lighted exit sign), and alternative evacuation routes should the normal exit path be blocked or inaccessible. Directors of Religious Education (DRE's) should routinely check all exit doors to ensure they are not blocked by piled snow or debris. It is also suggested that the DRE execute fire exit drills on a regular basis.

### **GUIDELINES**

- \* Instructors will calmly have the students form a single line at the door. The students closest to any open windows will close them as they proceed to the line.
- \* The instructor will check the hallway for smoke or fire and once all students are prepared to leave, they will lead the students to the nearest exit in a calm and orderly manner. The last student out is responsible for closing the classroom door. Younger students should hold each other's hand as they leave.
- \* The instructor will lead his/her class to a predetermined meeting point and count heads to ensure all students are accounted for. No one will re-enter the building until the proper signal is given.

Following these guidelines will help make the fire drills less time consuming and more efficient, thus making an emergency situation a safer, calmer experience for all involved.

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