

Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth

Guidelines for Selecting Speakers

Diocesan Programs, Parishes, Movements, Apostolic Groups, Catholic Schools

The following policy applies to Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators of any Catholic institution or organization in the Diocese of Fort Worth as they consider inviting speakers who will be teaching- presenting on matters that bear upon faith and morals.

It is the responsibility of the Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, and Administrators to present a list of potential speakers for Diocesan approval to the **Office of the Bishop (for all clergy and religious) or to the Diocesan Department of Catechesis (for all lay speakers)**. The Diocesan Bishop or designated Diocesan official (e.g. Vicar General, Chancellor-Moderator of the Curia) holds the right to make the final decision on a speaker (lay or religious).

Under current guidelines the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth has designated the **Vicar General** for the Diocese of Fort Worth to review and certify all clergy and religious who request to speak/present within the Diocese. The **Department Director for Catechesis** is designated to review and certify all lay speakers and presenters who request to speak/present within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

To be considered to speak in the Diocese of Fort Worth, a person should be in good standing with the Roman Catholic Church. The speaker's published documents and previous public presentations must also be in harmony and fidelity with the teaching and discipline of the Church, as prescribed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A priest who left the ministerial priesthood, is not eligible for consideration. Those in irregular marriages or those living a lifestyle at variance with Church teaching are not eligible.

Therefore, any speaker who publicly promotes or advocates views which are contrary to Church teaching and discipline may not give a talk, retreat, workshop, course, etc, at Church related events or on church, school, diocesan property, or Catholic institutions in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Likewise, anyone who publicly promotes or advocates views which are contrary to Church teaching or discipline may not be given awards, honors, or other marks of public recognition.

Pastors, Principals, Parish Directors of Religious Education, Administrators or heads of institutions should make a prudential judgement after preliminary research concerning the suitability of a speaker, in light of the above criteria. As a general rule, the invitation to any speaker or honoree should be an opportunity to evangelize, catechize, or better form the faithful. Thus, anything which may cause confusion, scandal or incite disrespect or dissent from the Catholic Church's faith, morals and/or discipline is to be avoided.

With regard to granting honorary awards, degrees, special recognition or commendation, the Diocese of Fort Worth abides by the 2004 policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that we should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles.

Required Documentation

For Priests/ Religious

1. Letter from the Diocesan Bishop or the Religious Superior. **(It must be original and recent- within a calendar year of the request.)**
2. Completion of all required Diocesan forms.
3. Proof of having completed Safe Environment Training.
4. A Curriculum Vitae with the following information:
 - a. Education (Catechetical/ Theological training and certifications) **Note: It is important that the speaker show evidence of competency in presenting the topic(s) in questions.**
 - b. Ministerial Experience
 - c. Current position

For Laity:

1. Letter from their Pastor or Diocesan official (where applicable) indicating that they are a Catholic in good standing. Form needs to be signed and dated with a visible seal.
2. Completion of all required Diocesan forms.
 - a. Request Form
 - b. Testimonial of Suitability signed and dated with visible seal
3. Proof of having completed Safe Environment Training.
4. A Curriculum Vitae with the following information:
 - a. Education (Catechetical/Theological training and certifications). **Note: It is important that the speaker show evidence of competency in presenting the topic(s) in question).**
 - b. Ministerial Experience
 - c. Current Position
5. Outline of Presentation or brief paragraph explaining the talk topic(s).

Parish/Host's Responsibilities

1. Submit the completed Request form.
2. Collect and submit all required documentation to the appropriate Diocesan **office at least three (3) months prior to the scheduled presentation date.**
3. Include an assessment of the speaker (i.e. reviews from past presentations etc.)
4. Clarify the purpose and goals of the event with the speaker and make sure these are clearly written on all forms.
5. Check Visa information (if the speaker is from outside the country).
6. Verify all appropriate speaker documents (i.e. curriculum vitae).
7. Provide an environment that supports learning (space and materials).
8. If it is possible, arrange for coverage with the media, video recording, etc.

Please Note:

- **A parish may not use a speaker already approved to speak at one parish to present at another parish without consent/approval of the Pastor of the parish in question and completion of a new Diocesan speaker form(s).** If the same speaker is presenting-teaching a new topic, a new

Diocesan form will need to be filled out to explain the background and purpose of the new topic in question.

- **Please use the Request Form for Incoming Priests, Deacons and/or Lay Speakers when submitting requests to the Office of the Bishop or the Department of Catechesis.**
- **All speaker requests must be turned in at minimum three (3) months prior to the scheduled event.**
- **All speakers must provide any information requested during the vetting process or risk being denied.**