



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND
EUROPE REGION
UNIT 29353, BOX 200
APO AE 09014

IMEU-RS

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SUBJECT: U.S. Army Religious Education/Faith Formation

1. **PURPOSE:** to provide an overview of U. S. Army Religious Education/Faith Formation

2. **FACTS:**

a. **Description: What is religious education/faith formation?**

(1) Religious education is a formative process that plays an integral part in stabilizing character, heart, and soul during the rigors of deployment, combat and reintegration. (AR 165-1)

(2) Religious education is the study of religious teachings including activities of faith sustainment (enrichment, formation, study or instruction), marriage enrichment, problem solving, communication skills, parenting skills, youth programs, religious literature. (FM 1-05, 1-14)

(3) Religious education in the U.S. Army involves the provision of comprehensive, lifelong religious education/faith formation programs and processes that include all ages, respond to diverse life situations, and facilitate the spiritual resilience of the Army community in all phases of the ARFORGEN/Composite Life Cycle. (IMCOM Campaign Plan 2010-2017)

(4) Religious education as a key component of the free exercise of religion has diverse expressions across religious and spiritual traditions. (AR 165-1 and FM 1-05)

b. **Rationale: Why engage in religious education/ faith formation (RE/FF)?**

(1) RE/FF contributes to Army well-being by addressing the spiritual state of the Army Family and providing opportunities for connection and personal growth. (AR 600-20, 3-4)

(2) RE/FF contributes to spiritual fitness as a part of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness by providing opportunities for spiritual reflection and self-development activities focused on the domain of the human spirit. (AR 600-63, 6-2)

(3) RE/FF engenders "military esprit de corps." (DODI 1100.22, 6 (1) e.)

(4) Multiple bodies of research show a high positive correlation between participation in faith formation practices and well-being. (Casey on the psycho-social benefits of religious practice and Pargement & Sweeney on religious coping)

c. **Leadership: Who is responsible for religious education/faith formation?**

(1) Commanders: The religious program for the Army is the commander's program. (AR 165-1, 1-9). The commander provides for the free exercise of religion of Soldiers and Families thereby enhancing the spiritual health of the command. To assure readiness across the full spectrum of operations, commanders provide for a wide range of religious support activities. (FM 1-05, 1-16)

(2) Chaplains: The Chaplain is a teacher of religion and provides religious instruction. The Chaplain is responsible to the commander for the religious education program. (AR 165-1, 3-2.(8)) The Garrison Chaplain provides direct supervision of the Directors of Religious Education (DRE), religious education specialists, or youth ministry specialists (Federal Civil Service employees) employed by the command. Usually the senior religious educator provides technical supervision of all other religious educators supporting the Garrison. (AR 165-1, 5-2.b)

(3) Civilian Professionals: According to the Federal Register civilian professionals are titled Directors of Religious Education (DRE) and work as Excepted Service Schedule A, GS 7, 9, 11, & 12 federal employees in garrisons. GS 7 & 9 DREs work with single faith groups. GS 11 & 12 DREs work with multiple faith groups. Religious Education Program Directors (REPD) work on a regional level as Excepted Service Schedule A, GS 12 & 13 federal employees. The Director of Religious Education Programs works at the DACH level as an Excepted Service Schedule A, GS 13/14 federal employee functioning in a strategic capacity to provide oversight and innovation for RE/FF across the Army. Most DREs are part of Army Career Program 32, Training, Capability, and Doctrine Warfighter Developers (TRADOC).

(a) DREs have been serving with the U.S. Army Chaplaincy since 1948 when E. Bryan Johnson went to work at Ft. Bragg, NC where she served until 1978.

(b) DREs are Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) with general knowledge of the interpretation of religious literature, theology, religious history and contemporary faith practice, and expert knowledge in religious education theory and practice, teaching & learning theory, education program design and implementation, human and faith development theory, curriculum design and evaluation, and spiritual formation.

(c) DREs are SMEs in all religious education and youth ministry matters for the Garrison Chaplain. They provide guidance, direction, advice and training to Chaplains, Soldiers and Families, distinctive faith groups, volunteers, civilians, and contractors. Particular skill sets include: 1) identifying, evaluating and selecting curriculum resources, 2) recruiting, training and recognizing volunteer teachers and leaders, and insuring the enforcement of child and youth protection policies.

(d) DREs "serve as the Garrison Chaplain's key resource persons in the area of religious education and spiritual formation. Religious education personnel analyze, develop, manage, present, and evaluate religious education programs and spiritual formation processes

that facilitate the religious and spiritual development of Soldiers and Family members.” (AR 165-1).

d. Context: Where does religious education/faith formation happen?

(1) Operational Units: RE/FF, usually in the form of small group studies, is conducted with Soldiers both in-garrison and down-range. RE/FF that utilizes opportunities for meaningful service and active engagement in the outdoors has been shown to positively impact young Soldiers, and young men in particular.

(2) Garrison Chapels: RE/FF programming is often identified with “schooling models” such as Catholic CRE and Protestant Sunday School conducted in Garrison Chapels, Religious Education Centers and/or other facilities such as DoDDs schools. Ongoing Garrison Chapel RE/FF programs also include Chapel Youth programs, PMOC, PWOC, MCCW, and Children’s Church programs. Key to the success of all Garrison Chapel RE/FF programs is building a strong connection between those programs and the worship life of Chapel congregations. Research indicates that faith “sticks” when educational programs are part of a larger intergenerational plan that is integrated with congregational worship.

(3) Wider Garrison Community: RE/FF also happens in partnership with other garrison agencies using other facilities and other educational models. Examples of this type of programming include Holistic Wellness Retreats conducted in partnership with Wellness Centers, Third Culture Kid training in partnership with ACS, and Holocaust Memorial Events in partnership with EEO.

e. Participants: Who participates in religious education/faith formation?

(1) Soldiers, Family Members, and authorized Department of Defense (DOD) Civilians are entitled to Chaplain support. (AR 165-1, 1-6.c.) All of these groups are recorded as participating in RE/FF programming.

(2) Multiple Faiths: Recent research shows that U.S. Army installations have provided religious education programming and support to Soldiers and Families in a myriad of faith communities including: 1) Buddhist, 2) Catholic, 3) Jewish, 4) Hindu, 5) Islamic 6) Latter Day Saints, 7) Orthodox, 8) Protestant, 9) Wiccan. (Religious Education Reporting System 2012 Annual Roll-up)

(3) Diverse Relationships to Organized Religion: Research indicates that attitudes towards organized religion fall along a continuum including increasing numbers of people who identify themselves as “spiritual” but not necessarily “religious.” Diverse RE/FF programming provides support for Soldiers and Families at various points along that continuum.

(4) Emerging Adults: A significant demographic in the U.S. Army has been identified as “Emerging Adults,” by researchers in the National Study of Youth and Religion. These young

people between the ages of 18-29 have unique, culturally-shaped outlooks on religion and spirituality. Diverse RE/FF programming provides generationally appropriate opportunities to explore matters of faith and life as emerging adults seek to renegotiate their primary relationships and role in the world.

(5) Families in Transition and Third Culture Kids: Significant dynamics of military life include the prominence of Soldiers and their Families living in transition and identifying as Third Culture Kids and/or Adults (TCK/A). Research indicates that these dynamics bring unique skills and challenges to military life. Diverse RE/FF programming provides practical wisdom for successfully navigating life transitions in a variety of cultural contexts. (Wertsch on the characteristics of Military BRATs; Pollock and Van Reken on the definition of TCKs)

f. Content: What is important to know and how is it made known?

(1) Be: Through the study of religious literature and the life of faith in practice, RE/FF in its diverse expressions explores basic questions of identity, meaning, purpose, and value towards the goal of participants becoming and being whole, integrated persons. For the military this is made known in leaders of character who, grounded in their respective faith traditions, exemplify values such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

(2) Know: Through the study of religious literature and the life of faith in practice, RE/FF in its diverse expressions guides participants in identifying and coming to know “the good” towards the goal of living moral and ethical lives. For the military this is made known in principled leaders who, grounded in their respective faith traditions, combine their knowledge of people, concepts and equipment to work for the common good and the fulfillment of the mission.

(3) Do: Through the study of religious literature and the life of faith in practice, RE/FF in its diverse expressions challenges participants to do what is right for self and others. For the military this is made known in influential leaders who, grounded in their respective faith traditions, advance the mission by developing subordinates, building teams and fostering learning throughout the military.

g. Methods & Models: How is religious education/faith formation done?

(a) RE/FF is inclusive of, but not limited to age-based Catholic CRE, Protestant Sunday School, and Vacation Bible School. Though these traditional programs provide needed stability and continuity to Soldiers and their Families living in a time of persistent conflict, they do not represent the fullness of RE/FF support in today’s Chaplaincy.

(b) Composite Life Cycle: Along with Chapel-based RE/FF that is integrated into the worship life of congregations, targeted RE/FF programs such as Family Building Assemblies

reach out to the larger garrison community to provide support and sustainment through transitions within the Composite Life Cycle. (AHPRRSP Report 2010)

(c) Family Formation: Social media and other technologies, curated by professional RE/FF personnel, build the resilience of Families by providing programming and resources for use in the home.

(d) Generational and Intergenerational Formation: RE/FF programs that address the lifestyles and spiritual concerns of generational cohorts, build esprit de corps and help to mitigate generational stressors. Intergenerational programs promote lifelong faith development that “sticks.” Both generational and intergenerational programs highlight the positive role that community plays in building resilience.

(e) Faith and Spiritual Practices: RE/FF programs that foster formation in faith/spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation provide Soldiers and Families with helpful resources for coping with major “stress windows” in the Composite Life Cycle. (AHPRRSP Report 2010)

h. Challenges: What makes religious education/faith formation in the U.S. Army challenging?

(1) Pre-conception: The days of 20th century age-based, schooling models of RE/FF have past. Though traditional programs remain a valued component of a comprehensive RE/FF program, research indicates that they are inadequate to the task of developing spiritual fitness and resilience in Soldiers and Families. 21st century RE/FF incorporates schooling, congregational, family, spiritual practices, and community-based models. It also leverages social media and other technologies that support participants in their search to BE, to KNOW, and to DO in accordance with their deepest held convictions.

(2) Resources: In a time of general fiscal constraint, RE/FF curriculum resources and other educational materials are being scrutinized to find greater AF and NAF efficiencies. Complicating factors include: 1) the pre-conception noted above because what constitutes mission essential RE/FF has evolved; and 2) fewer DREs across the Army means fewer trained professionals who have the expertise to find those efficiencies while maintaining the integrity and developing the potential of a particular Chapel’s programs.

References

AR 165-1
AR 600-20
AR 600-63
DODI 100.22
FM 1-05
FM 6-22 (FM 22-100)

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