

Catechist Formation Guidelines

Revision – March 2006

Our Rationale:

Catechists play a pre-eminent role in the evangelizing mission of the Church. This role of passing on the faith as well as deepening our understanding and commitment to living the faith is a privilege, right and responsibility from our Baptism in Christ. It is vital that each person called to participate in this mission have a mature and living, adult faith as well as the understanding and skill to share it effectively.

In order to achieve an evangelizing catechesis, the pastoral offices of the Diocese of Raleigh collaborate with parishes, schools and deaneries, as well as resource with other catechetical and pastoral ministry organizations to provide a blend of onsite and online formation.

The diocese has three levels of Catechist Certification: Initial Certification, Ongoing Certification, and Master Catechist Certification.

The Bishop of Raleigh has the following expectations:

- ❖ Formation and certification is expected of all those who catechize children, youth, and/or adults (English or Spanish speaking), whether in a parish or a school setting. It is expected of those who serve as catechists on RCIA teams and other sacramental preparation teams as well as those engaged in specialized ministries.
- ❖ Each catechist (English or Spanish speaking) in the diocese is expected to complete Initial Formation Certification and then continue in his/her Ongoing Formation.
- ❖ All parish directors of faith formation (English or Spanish speaking), parish directors of youth ministry (English or Spanish speaking), and at least one person in each Catholic School are expected to be, or in the process of becoming certified, Master Catechists.

Formation Opportunities:

This formation includes, but is not limited to the following ways (please see the diocesan website: (www.dioceseofraleigh.org)):

- Participation in parish-based catechist formation (e.g. Echoes of Faith/Ecos de Fe (www.rclweb.com) or other diocesan approved program).
- Participation in deanery-based catechist formation days.
- Participation in the Virtual Learning Community (VLC) for Faith Formation online courses in English and Spanish (Comunidad Cibernetica Para La Formacion En La Fe) through the University of Dayton (<http://vlc.udayton.edu/>).
- Participation in the Youth Ministry Certificate Program, the Young Adult Ministry Certificate Program and the Lifelong Faith Formation Certificate Program offered

through the Center for Ministry Development (www.cmdnet.org).

- Participation in the Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP) through the University of Notre Dame (<http://step.nd.edu>)
- Participation in diocesan sponsored or approved conferences, workshops and seminars (many are offered at the deanery level).
- Participation in independent and/or small group formation, using designated materials and completing a reporting form (e.g. Catechist magazine).
- Participation in provincial and/or national conferences such as the East Coast Conference for Religious Education, NCCL (www.nccl.org) or NCEA (www.ncea.org) and NALM (www.nalm.org) conferences.
- Participation in the diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program in English or Spanish (Llamados a Servir).
- Participation in the Certificate for Preaching the Word through the Dominican Friars of St. Martin de Porres Province.
- Participation in the School of Ministry/Escuela De Ministerios Program offered in Spanish through the Southeastern Pastoral Institute/El Instituto Pastoral del Sureste (SEPI) (www.sepimiami.org).
- Participation in the master's degree or certificate program in religious education or pastoral studies offered through Loyola University, New Orleans (www.loyno.edu/lim/extension/index.html).
- Participation in the Specialized Certificate in Pastoral Life and Administration or the Specialized Certificate in Christian Spirituality offered by the Office for Lay Ministry through the Loyal Pastoral Life Center, Loyola University, New Orleans. (www.loyno.edu/lplc/index.html).
- Participation in JustFaith, a 30 week justice education/formation program.
- Participation in the Social Justice Distance Learning Certificate Program through the University of Dayton and the Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors.
- Participation in training through the North American Forum for the Catechumenate.
- Participation in a bachelor's or master's degree program in theology (e.g. Religious Studies, Pastoral Studies, Religious Education) from other universities (ex; Brescia University, Felician College, CDU, etc.)
- Participation in the Certificate program for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.
- Participation in the Certificate program for Family Honor.
- Participation in Foundations for Catechetical Leaders (for the newly hired).
- Participation in the Emmaus Conference, the annual diocesan wide conference for catechists in October.
- Participation in the annual Evangelization and Catechesis Retreat in January.

Prior Formation:

An individual's prior formation, whether from the Diocese of Raleigh or from another diocese, needs to be evaluated and recognized. This is done in consultation with the parish director of religious education (DRE), Hispanic coordinator of religious education and/or diocesan staff (e.g. Division of Evangelization and Catechesis, Office for Hispanic Ministry or the Office for Lay Ministry).

What are CEUs/Contact Hours/Clock Hours?

CEUs are a recognized unit of measurement designed to record an individual's continuing education/formation accomplishments. One CEU is awarded for every 10 contact hours of instruction/formation. Contact hours less than 10 are represented as a decimal number.

Contact hours are calculated on the amount of contact formation time for the workshop or event. Normally, hospitality, breaks or lunch are not counted as contact time. Contact hours are not the same as University credits.

Clock hours are also frequently referred to by various outside programs and conferences. Clock hours are calculated on total time from start to end of the event. Hospitality, breaks, lunch or socials are generally included, but must be subtracted to calculate creditable contact time.

Most diocesan event brochures will provide a typical statement: “ ____CEUs or ____Contact hours for ongoing formation are available for parish catechists, lay ministers, and Catholic School teachers.”

Designing a Personal Formation Process:

Annually, each catechist assesses his/her catechetical proficiency. At the Initial and Ongoing levels, catechists, together with their parish directors, determine what he/she needs to be a more effective catechist. If the parish director does not feel comfortable making this assessment with the catechist, diocesan catechetical staff will assist him/her. The Initial and Ongoing Catechist Formation list and/or the Assessment for Catechists can serve as basic guidelines to measure proficiency and to identify areas where development is needed. After completing the assessment, each catechist should develop his or her own personal Formation Development Plan for the year.

The Three Levels of Catechist Certification

1. Initial Catechist Certification

This level applies to individuals beginning in the ministry of catechesis of children, youth young adults and adults in a parish or school setting.

Requirements:

- 30 contact hours (3 CEUs) are to be obtained via *Echoes of Faith/Ecos de Fe*, a module series of video and booklet based training, or other diocesan approved program in English or Spanish.
- *Echoes of Faith/Ecos de Fe* consists of three sets of modules. Catechists of children and youth are to complete ten modules (sets 1, 2, Intro. to the Learner and an appropriate grade level method). Catechists of young adults and adults are to complete nine modules (sets 1, 2, and Intro. to the Learner).

Set 1 - There are three catechist modules: Getting Started as a Catechist, The Roles of the Catechist, and The Person of the Catechist.

Set 2 - There are five theology modules: I Believe/We Believe, Introduction to the Scriptures, Liturgy & Sacraments, Catholic Morality and Prayer & Spirituality.

Set 3 - There are five methodology modules: Introduction to the Learner, Methods for Grades 1 & 2, Methods for Grades 3 & 4, Methods for Grades 5 & 6, Methods for Grades 7 & 8.

Additional contact hours (CEUs) are available from a variety of other formation opportunities. (See the formation opportunities list and the diocesan website.) These extra hours can be applied to the Ongoing Certification level.

Record Keeping/Recognition:

- The parish director of religious education keeps a record of formation participation for each catechist. A form is provided in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders.
- The individual catechist keeps a record of his/her formation participation. A form is provided in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders.
- When an individual catechist completes the Initial level requirements 30 contact hours (3 CEUs) of formation, a certificate is issued through the parish.

2. Ongoing Catechist Certification

This level applies to individuals who have completed the Initial Catechist Formation 30 contact hours (3 CEUs) and are continuing their formation. It also applies to those who have not yet completed the process of becoming certified as Master Catechist.

Requirements:

- 90 contact hours (9 CEUs)

Option I: Ongoing Certification may be obtained via the Virtual Learning Community (VLC) Program of online courses and seminars through the University of Dayton. Four courses are to be completed. Each five-week VLC course provides 25 contact hours (2.5 CEUs) and each three-week seminar provides 15 contact hours (1.5 CEUs).

Option II: Ongoing Certification may be obtained by completing the diocesan approved Certificate Programs for Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry or Lifelong Faith Formation via the Center for Ministry Development, or the Certificate Programs for Pastoral Life and Administration, and Christian Spirituality via Loyola University of New Orleans as well as the programs for Landings, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Family Honor and the Social Justice Distance Learning Certificate Program.

Option III: Ongoing Certification may be obtained by completing half of the diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program in English or Spanish (contact the Office for Lay Ministry) or half of the Escuela De Ministerios Program via SEPI (contact the Office for Hispanic Ministry).

- Additional contact hours (CEUs) may be obtained from a variety of other formation opportunities. (See the formation opportunities list and the diocesan website)

A Note about Specialized Certificate Programs:

Specialized Certificate Programs accepted by the diocese (e.g. Preaching the Word, Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, Lifelong Faith Formation, Pastoral Life and Administration, Christian Spirituality, Landings, Natural Family Planning, JustFaith, Family Honor and the Social Justice Distance Learning Certificate Program etc.) vary in theological content and comprehensiveness. It is suggested that participants regularly consult with the diocesan formation offices to assess ways to address any theological deficiencies prior to applying for Master Catechist Certification. Other Certificate Programs may be considered or accepted upon review as they become available.

Record Keeping/Recognition:

- The parish director of religious education keeps a record of formation participation for each catechist. A form is provided in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders.
- The individual catechist keeps a record of his/her formation participation. A form is provided in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders.
- Upon the completion of any VLC course or seminar, the participant will receive a Certificate issued jointly by the University of Dayton and the Diocese.
- Upon the completion of the Certificate Programs for Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry or Lifelong Faith Formation the participant will receive a Certificate issued jointly by the Center for Ministry Development and the Diocese.
- Participants in the Escuela De Ministerios Program should inform the diocesan director of Hispanic Ministry.
- Participants in the Lay Ministry Formation Program should inform the diocesan director for Lay Ministry.

- When an individual catechist completes the Ongoing Certification level requirements, send all documenting paperwork to the Office for Lay Ministry for review and an Ongoing Certificate will be issued.

Renewal of Status for Initial and Ongoing Certification levels:

Initial Certification:

To renew Initial Certification, a catechist is encouraged to complete an additional 10 contact hours (1CEU) of formation each year. Other areas of formation, including both professional and spiritual formation, need to be determined together with the parish director to plan for continued growth. It is suggested that catechists consult regularly with diocesan catechetical staff to identify opportunities for their ongoing Formation Development Plan. These renewal contact hours (CEUs) are applicable toward Ongoing Certification and becoming a Master Catechist. A form is provided in the Handbook for Parish Catechetical Leaders for parish directors to track this training.

Ongoing Certification:

Ongoing Certification is renewable every three years. An ongoing catechist should complete 15 contact hours of formation (1.5 CEUs) per year for renewal. It is suggested that catechists consult regularly with diocesan catechetical staff to identify opportunities for their ongoing Formation Development Plan. These renewal contact hours (CEUs) are applicable toward becoming a Master Catechist. At the end of each year, the parish director informs the catechetical staff of the Diocese what additional hours (CEUs) have been completed by the catechist. A form is provided in the Handbook for Catechetical Leaders for parish directors to track this training.

3. Master Catechist Certification

The Diocese of Raleigh designates as Master Catechists individuals who have pursued theological study beyond the basic level and have also developed the skills necessary to provide catechetical training to other adults. The Master Catechist Certification is issued by the Office for Lay Ministry and signed by the Bishop and the directors of the Office for Lay Ministry and the Division of Catechesis and Evangelization. A copy of this certificate will be forwarded to the appropriate person in the parish. In celebration of Catechetical Sunday the names of all Master Catechists and their parishes are published.

Master Catechist Initial Certification Requirements:

Those seeking Master Catechist Certification for the first time must submit evidence of a solid background in Roman Catholic teachings and spiritual formation as well as experience in catechetical ministry and in facilitating adult learning. (See the Note about Specialized Certificate Programs.) Candidates may use four options for demonstrating their qualifications.

Option I:

- Hold at least a B.A. degree in theology or religious education, or hold a bachelor's degree in education, or related field, and show evidence of completion of courses/workshops in scripture, Christology, sacraments, Catholic creedal teachings, and moral life.
- Present evidence of at least three years catechetical experience.
- Present evidence of at least three years experience teaching/facilitating adult learning.
- Participate in 16 hours of spiritual enrichment activities in the parish, diocese, or other approved venue.
- Submit Vita Form and Certificate of Attendance to the Office for Lay Ministry.

Option II:

- Complete certification through the diocesan Lay Ministry Formation Program in English or Spanish (Llamados a Servir) or the Escuela De Ministerios Program from SEPI.
- Participate in four skills workshops offered through a diocesan pastoral office.
- Present evidence of at least three years catechetical experience.
- Present evidence of at least three years experience teaching/facilitating adult learning.

- Participate in 16 hours of spiritual enrichment activities in the parish, diocese, or other approved venue.
- Submit Vita Form and Certificate of Attendance to the Office for Lay Ministry.

Option III:

- Complete 12 courses through the University of Dayton Virtual Learning Community Program covering the following subject areas: Christian Beliefs, Catholic Doctrine, Church History (1 & 2), Catholic Social Teaching, Catechesis, Ecclesiology, Ecumenism, Evangelization, Jesus, Sacraments, Scripture (OT & NT), Conscience, Morality, Liturgy and Prayer.
- Participate in four skills workshops offered through a diocesan pastoral office.
- Present evidence of at least three years catechetical experience.
- Present evidence of at least three years experience teaching/facilitating adult learning.
- Participate in 16 hours of spiritual enrichment activities in the parish, diocese, or other approved venue.
- Submit Vita Form and Certificate of Attendance to the Office for Lay Ministry.

Option IV:

- Complete an approved professional level Certificate Program accepted by the Diocese.
- Provide evidence of completion of theological courses/workshops in: Scripture, Christology, Sacraments, Catholic creedal teachings, and moral life.
- Participate in four skills workshops offered through a diocesan pastoral office.
- Present evidence of at least three years catechetical experience.
- Present evidence of at least three years experience teaching/facilitating adult learning.
- Participate in 16 hours of spiritual enrichment activities in the parish, diocese, or other approved venue.
- Submit Vita Form and Certificate of Attendance to the Office for Lay Ministry.

Master Catechist Certification Renewal Requirements

Master Catechist certification must be renewed every three years and is contingent upon 20 contact hours (2 CEUs) of formation. These hours should include both professional and spiritual formation. It is suggested that the Master Catechist consult with the director for Lay Ministry and/or the director of Evangelization and Catechesis in order to identify on-going formation activities which will best contribute to the growth of the Master Catechist's spirituality and skills.

The Master Catechist applying for renewal must submit to the Office for Lay Ministry a new Vita Form together with a Certificate of Attendance covering the three years since certification was issued. Keeping records of the courses, workshops, and spiritual formation activities which they attend is the responsibility of the individual catechists.

Catholic School Teachers:

In addition to the above, Catholic School teachers receive 1 CEU for every 10 contact hours of formation. To receive CEU credit from the Catholic School Office, prior approval of workshop topics and methods are required from the Superintendent. The required forms must also be completed. Whenever possible, the diocesan formation offices and the school offices will pre-approve workshops for Catholic School teachers. This approval will be indicated on registration forms and flyers.