



ARCHDIOCESE OF
NEW ORLEANS

Archdiocese of New Orleans Catechist Certification Program (ACCP)



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Philosophy

“The formation of catechists continues to be a high priority” (NDC #3, p. 9) in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We believe that the Catechist is a person called to echo and witness to the Word and Good News of Jesus Christ in all areas of his/her life. Therefore, if the message of Faith is to be truly lived, the catechist must be given the opportunity of participating in an on-going formation program. This will enable the catechist to become better informed and formed in the teachings and doctrines of our Catholic Christian tradition.

In accepting this call you have made a very important step in your Baptismal commitment. As the word Catechist implies you are accepting the call to go out and ECHO (GK. Katechein) the Good News of Jesus Christ. You are becoming a faith-filled companion to those you teach – a story-teller of the Gospel message. Thank you for answering God’s call to catechize God’s people, especially God’s children.

Who Needs to be Certified?

Anyone teaching in a Parish School of Religion class, Elementary (Grades K-7) Catholic School Religion Program, RCIA Facilitator, Catholic School Administrator and Campus Minister or Adult Faith Formation teacher needs to seek certification. All Catholic High School Religion Teachers (Grades 8-12) are required to have a minimum of 24 hours in Theology from an accredited Catholic College or Catholic University. Six college credit hours must already be completed before an instructor can begin teaching Religion. All 24 college credit hours must be completed within three years of being hired. If you have already completed a specific level of certification in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, or from another Diocese, you are encouraged to begin work on the next level.

In order to maintain certification you must complete ten Continuing Education Unit hours annually. This may be accomplished through Religious Education Conferences, Adult Faith Formation classes in your parish or through an Archdiocesan class, self study of a theological topic and/or spiritual reading book, or on-line course in Theology. If there are any questions, please contact the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education.

Why Do I Need Certification Courses?

As with any area of life it is by doing that we learn and by example that we succeed. As stated in the National Directory for Catechesis #55, Part A p. 235 “Programs of formation (for the catechetical mission) should be designed to help them (volunteers or paid catechists) acquire the knowledge and skills they need to hand on the faith to those entrusted to their care and assist them in living as disciples of Christ.” Therefore the process of certification helps those called to this ministry become formed in the faith and allows the catechists the opportunity to renew their understanding of Catholic teachings. It will aid you in your relationship with God, the God who calls you to ministry and allows you to have greater confidence when you enter the classroom.

Getting Started

Now that you have accepted this call how do you get started and prepare for this special ministry? The Parish Catechetical Leaders in your parish will be your best resource as you begin (or continue) your catechetical ministry. The Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education is another helpful resource. It is through the Archdiocesan Office that your training will occur by participating in the Archdiocesan Catechist Certification Program (see below).

To begin the certification process, a catechist should contact their Parish Catechetical Leader or Catholic School Principal for the course

listings and enroll in the appropriate courses. Each course has a \$10 fee. However, no parish or catechist will be refused certification courses due to economic circumstances.

The Certification Process

There is a three-fold purpose to the certification process:

1. To provide the catechist with opportunity and exposure to life-long formation in the Faith of the Church.
2. To provide the catechist with the necessary skills to prepare for the practical aspects of the catechetical ministry in a classroom setting.
3. To provide the catechist with adequate theological knowledge of at least the basic concepts and teachings of the Catholic Church.

In order to accomplish these purposes the Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans has established four levels of certification with a prerequisite introductory level.

I. Introduction to the Catechetical Ministry

II. Basic Level

III. Advanced Level

IV. Master's Level



Introduction to the Catechetical Ministry

These courses are two hours each and are intended for those persons with no previous teaching experience and/or no educational course background. As a prerequisite to beginning the certification process, the Catechist should satisfactorily complete three introductory courses on theology of the catechist and a pedagogical course on the child as learner and a methodology course on the appropriate grade level taught.

Getting Started as a Catechist

Course 1

This course will introduce basic essentials needed for beginning the catechetical ministry: 1) creating the right physical environment; 2) nurturing the social environment; 3) creative activities for learning; 4) planning for success.

The Roles of the Catechist

Course 2

In this course the role of the catechist will be explored. The catechist has four main roles: 1) storyteller; 2) teacher-companion; 3) leader of prayer; 4) witness for justice.

The Person of the Catechist

Course 3

The vocation of the catechist, qualities of the catechist, growth as a catechist and trusting in the work of the Spirit are all addressed in this course.

Introduction to the Learner

Course 4

The varied human moral and faith development dimension of the learner is explored in this course, three areas of focus are: 1) how to build knowledge and construct learning; 2) how humans grow psychologically and relate to others; 3) how humans grow in ability to think and act.

Methodology

Course 5

There are four grade level modules that address methods, techniques, and strategies for helping particular grade levels to grow in faith and knowledge. Each level deals with: 1) overview of human growth and development; 2) a description of abilities of the child at a particular grade level; 3) demonstrations of effective learning strategies for the grade level addressed.

Basic Level* Certification Requirements

The catechist should satisfactorily complete eight, 10-hour theology courses listed below to achieve Basic Certification:

The Creed

Course B 1

We are called to ‘hand on the faith’ of the Church. But to do this effectively we must both know and live this faith. This course will examine the creed and beliefs of the church using the catechism as the basis.

Catholic Understanding of Scripture

Course B 2

This course introduces the catechist to basic beliefs about the Catholic understanding of scripture, especially the creation account, the covenant made by God with Abraham and his descendants and God’s covenant with Jesus.

Christology

Course B 3

This course will explore who is Jesus Christ, especially in today’s society. It will help provide clear knowledge of Jesus and help bring the catechist into a prayerful relationship with Jesus.

Sacraments and Worship

Course B 4

The purpose of this course is to examine the unique activity of sacraments and worship in the Church. The course will focus on the purpose, methods, and goals of sacramental worship within the context of the meaning of sacraments in the Church.

This course will also enable catechists to form people in the liturgical life of the Church. The course will focus on basic principles of liturgical theology, liturgical celebration and the dominant liturgical symbols of the Church.

Personal Morality

Course B 5

“The most basic principle of the Christian moral life is the awareness that every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God.” – excerpted from the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

This awareness of each person’s dignity encourages and enables us to consider how we use our freedom for our own good. This course will include a reflection on natural law, conscience, virtue, and the elements of the moral act. This course will also explore the challenges of living a life of holiness in modern society and the great treasury of resources that can assist Christians in daily life.

Social Morality

Course B 6

“The most basic principle of the Christian moral life is the awareness that every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God.” – excerpted from the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

This awareness of each person’s dignity encourages and enables us to consider how we use our freedom for the good of society. This course will explore the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching as outlined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the complementarity of charity and justice and contemporary issues of peace and justice.

Introduction to Church History

Course B 7

Included in this course are four major areas: 1) Scripture and dogma, 2) lives of the saints, 3) Tradition, and 4) Periods of the Church’s historical growth

***Ecclesiology & the Mission of the Church* Course B 8**

This course is about the Church and her mission in today's world. It presents the theology of the Church and uses the experience of the Church's family as its vision.

**These courses are available in each deanery; please contact the Office of Religious Education to request a course to be taught in your parish. Also check your parish bulletin, ORE website and the Clarion Herald for courses offered in your area.*

Advanced Level Certification Requirements**

The catechist should satisfactorily complete six, 10-hour advanced theology courses listed below to achieve advanced certification:

Hebrew Scripture

Course A 1

This course will allow the catechist to “unpack” the Biblical text by examining the literature of the Hebrew Scripture in the literary styles in which it was written. Modern biblical scholarship as historical – critical method, form, source and literary criticism will be used.

Christian Scripture

Course A 2

This course builds on the basic principle presented in Hebrew Scripture Course. The catechist will explore Christian Scripture as the early faith documents of the first and early second century church.

Church History

Course A 3

This course will explore how the church has evolved over the last 2000 years, examining the structural, liturgical, theological and moral aspects in her historical development.

Sacraments

Course A 4

This course builds on Introduction to the Sacraments, B4, and further explores the richness of symbols of Sacraments. It allows the catechist to deepen this theological understanding of the sacraments and the implication of sacramental life in their ministry.

Prayer and Worship

Course A 5

This course will help the catechist examine the element of ritual in liturgy. It will also expose the catechist to various prayer forms as they grow in their prayer life. This course will also help the catechist in the classroom by experimenting with various prayer styles and prayer space styles.

Morality

Course A 6

This course explores the meaning of a moral person based on Catholic social teaching and moral teaching. A theological framework for making moral decisions and how to lead others to the moral decision making process will be examined.

As before they will be taught in each deanery by a master catechist. Please contact the Office of Religious Education to request a course to be taught in your parish. Also check your parish bulletin, ORE website and the Clarion Herald for courses offered in your area.

Master's Level* Certification Requirements**

The catechist should satisfactorily complete the requirements for a Master's Degree in theology from a recognized Catholic University.

