# What Is a Catechist?

**WHAT IS A CATECHIST?**

Archdiocese of Dubuque
Office of Catechetical Services

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<th>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</th>
<th>WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?</th>
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<td><strong>Having never been a teacher, how do I learn to teach?</strong> Your Faith Formation Leader, frequently called a DRE/CRE, will assist you. Inservices are provided throughout the year that deal with effective teaching techniques.</td>
<td>• You will grow deeper in your own faith, in your knowledge of the teachings of the Church, and in your relationship with Jesus.</td>
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<td><strong>Who will assist me with lesson plans?</strong> Textbooks recommended by the Archdiocese are designed for the catechist with no formal training. Teaching manuals are user-friendly and have a multitude of ideas on how to prepare and present lessons.</td>
<td>• You will be provided with excellent resources that provide you with great support.</td>
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<td><strong>Without a background in theology, how am I expected to pass on the faith?</strong> The role of the catechist is not based on a professional background in theology, rather, the ability to share faith, live faith, and journey with others as their faith develops and matures.</td>
<td>• You will meet new people and become part of a vibrant faith community.</td>
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<td><strong>What if I don’t know the answers to the questions I am asked?</strong> Resources are available through your Faith Formation Leader and the Archdiocese. You will learn together with those you are catechizing.</td>
<td>• You will be putting your faith into action, living out your baptismal call.</td>
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<td><strong>What about classroom management?</strong> Your Faith Formation Leader and catechist colleagues can offer motivation to encourage and maintain a positive and respectful learning environment.</td>
<td>• You will have the privilege of walking with others on their faith journey.</td>
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<td><strong>Other than the weekly session, how much time will be expected?</strong> Lesson preparation time is outside the weekly session time and can take approximately one to two hours to be fully prepared for each session. Inservice opportunities are provided in addition to weekly sessions, but are usually scheduled in lieu of session.</td>
<td>• You will be energized.</td>
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<td>• You will have the opportunity to share your own faith story.</td>
<td>• You will be mentoring others in a variety of ways using the knowledge and skills you already possess.</td>
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<td>• You will see the joy of knowing Jesus in the eyes of those you teach. What’s better than that?</td>
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**Parish Name:**

**Parish Contact:**
## SPIRITUALITY OF A CATECHIST

1. **An Openness to God** – we are called to be champions of the First Commandment, inviting others to place their trust in God above all things.

2. **An Openness to the Church** – we are called to recognize that the faith we proclaim is a gift given to us by the Church. We are called to deepen our understanding of that faith so that we can better embrace it and effectively transmit it.

3. **An Openness to the World** – catechists are not called to withdraw from the world and to invite others to do the same. That’s what cults do. We are called to courageously enter into the world and help those we teach to recognize the presence of God that is already there.

4. **A Missionary Zeal** – we are called to communicate a sense of enthusiasm about our faith that is contagious.

5. **A Coherence and Authenticity of Life** – we are called to be the real deal, practicing what we preach and inviting those we teach to discover real and practical ways of living the Gospel in everyday life.

6. **A Devotion to Mary** – we are called to emulate Mary, the catechist par excellence. She embodies all of the above and from her, we can learn how to draw others to her Son, Jesus.

As explained by Joe Paprocki from the Guide for Catechists (Document of vocational, formative, and promotional orientation of Catechists by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples)

## CATECHIST RESPONSIBILITIES

The catechist, whether he or she works alone or on a team, has the major responsibility of conducting the session.

### A. Prior to the Session

1. Lesson plans need to be prepared in advance. This includes selecting and obtaining or reserving any materials/resources required.

### B. During the Session

1. Greet the participants as they arrive and take attendance.
2. Conduct the session, adjusting the lesson plan as needed.
3. Attend to the class needs as well as to individual needs of the participants.
4. Delegate clearly to the assistant his or her responsibilities for the session.
5. Communicate with the program director/coordinator any needs or concerns that require immediate attention.

### C. After the Session

1. Clean up the area used for the session.
2. Communicate with the coordinator any needs or concerns.

### D. Other

1. Evaluation – Catechists are to be evaluated and participate in the evaluation process of the program.
2. Endorsement – The catechist needs to be working towards or acquire Archdiocese of Dubuque Catechist Endorsement.
3. Protection of Children Requirements – All catechists expected to follow all Protection of Children Requirements.

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