



# BASIC CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION POLICY

## Office for Catechetical Formation

### Archdiocese of Philadelphia

## Catechesis

Catechesis is sharing the teachings of Jesus Christ in such a way that the believer comes to know God, believe in Him and his teachings, and enter a deeper and transformative relationship with Jesus Christ. Catechesis involves the teaching of doctrine as well as the living practice of the faith. Catechizing and being catechized are lifelong responsibilities for every Catholic.

Catechesis seeks to: promote knowledge of the faith; promote knowledge into the Celebration of the Mystery; promote moral formation for Life in Jesus Christ; teach Christians how to pray with Christ; and introduce Christians to live in community participating actively in the life and mission of the Church.

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*“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”*  
*St. John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae, 5*

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## Called to be a Catechist

The ministry of the catechist is a vocation, an interior call of the Holy Spirit. It springs from the Sacrament of Baptism and is strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation. Catechists are practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the Church, and who have been prepared for their apostolate by appropriate catechetical training.

Catechists are called to holiness. Holiness is characterized by a love of God and a life of faith, hope and love that manifests itself in daily prayer. The call to holiness is marked by an apostolic spirit and missionary zeal, a love for their brothers and sisters through generous service, and a life devoted to the Eucharist and Mary.

All the baptized are called to participate in the catechetical ministry. Some are called to more

specific catechetical roles. Bishops are primarily responsible for catechesis. Priests share the teaching role of the bishop and are his immediate collaborators. Catechists assist bishops and priests in the catechetical mission by teaching the faith.

## Catechetical Formation

To present the Catholic faith in its fullness and in a way that is attractive, those who catechize need preparation and ongoing formation. Catechist formation must ensure that catechists receive assistance in developing and nurturing their knowledge of the faith and the Gospel message as well as the ability to transmit it. Catechetical Formation involves intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and human dimensions. It promotes: an understanding of the nature and goals of catechesis; knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and practice; familiarity with resources; awareness of methodologies associated with the social, cultural, ethnic, demographic and religious circumstances of people who are served; ongoing study of scripture and theology; growth in human, spiritual and pastoral qualities necessary for the work of a catechist; unity with pastors and the Church where all authentic religious education occurs.

To assist the catechist in his/her faith formation, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia provides two levels of catechetical certification:

- Basic Catechetical Certification
- Master Catechetical Certification

## Basic Catechetical Certification

All Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) catechists are required to hold a Basic Catechetical Certification.

## Requirements

PREP catechists earn a Basic Catechetical Certification by completing the Loyola Press Catechetical Formation Series within the second year of their teaching.

PREP catechists who hold an undergraduate degree in theology or religious studies from a Catholic College or University or an Archdiocesan Master Level Certification have fulfilled the Basic Catechetical Certification requirements. The Director/Coordinator of Religious Education should send the catechist college transcript for review to the Office for Catechetical Formation (OCF).

## Loyola Press Catechetical Formation Series

A ten session, online program of power point presentations hosted by Loyola Press Master catechists. This program can be accessed at home, in an individual setting, or in a parish group setting. Each session not only deepens catechists' knowledge and skills for the teaching ministry but also forms them in areas critical to their vocation: *being, knowing, and doing*. Downloadable worksheets enhance each session with reflection questions of the content taught and can be used for group discussion or submitted to the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education.

### Catechetical Formation Series Sessions

- Getting Started and Getting to Know Your Learners
- The Catechetical Process
- Prayer and Leading Prayer
- Facilitation Skills and Handling Difficult Situations
- What We Believe: The Creed
- What We Believe: The Sacraments
- What We Believe: The Moral Life
- What We Believe: Prayer
- Understanding God's Word – Scripture
- The Person of the Catechist

### Parish Responsibilities

The Parish Director/Coordinator of Religious Education in conjunction of the pastor determines the setting for his/her catechists, that is, an individual home study or parish study group. It is the parish responsibility to monitor the Loyola Catechetical Formation Series plan for each

catechist as well as the progress of each catechist towards the completion of his/her Basic Catechetical Certification.

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*“A catechist is a lifelong Christian disciple who seeks to grow daily in knowledge and love of the Word of God with dedication to forming others through personal witness to Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.”*  
– *Directory for Catechesis Leader's Guide, 8*

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## Archdiocesan Catechetical Certification Record

Upon completion of the Catechetical Formation Series, the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education submits the form found on the Guidelines for Religious Education/Appendix 4 for each catechist to the OCF. The OCF will create or update an electronic record for the catechist which reflects the completion of his/her Basic Catechetical Certification. A Basic Catechetical Certification certificate will be emailed to the catechist for his/her records and a copy to the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education.

## Master Catechetical Certification... *Going Beyond Basic*

PREP catechists who hold a Basic Catechetical Certification may desire to further their studies of the catechetical ministry. They are invited to pursue a Master Catechetical Certification.

Their Basic Catechetical Certification satisfies one credit towards Master Catechetical Certification.

For more information about Master Catechetical Certification, go to:  
<https://phillyocf.org/certification/>

