

Diocese of Sacramento
BASIC FORMATION FOR CATECHISTS
GUIDELINES 2004

The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of all and renew the human race. (Evangelii Nuntiandi 14, 18)

Those who have been called to the ministry of teaching and proclamation share intimately in the work of the Gospel. To help others to come "*not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ*" is a work of incalculable value. To be faithful to the ministry of evangelization and catechesis, the catechist must be rooted in prayer, knowledgeable of the faith which is the treasure of Catholic belief, fed through the worship and communal life of the church, and skilled in the techniques appropriate to the task. Such ministry demands formation of those engaged in it whether they nurture the faith of children or assist adults to deepen their lives of faith.

Recognizing the importance of education and formation for persons actively participating in the catechetical ministry of the Church, the bishops of California have called catechists to participate in a basic level of formation to prepare them adequately for beginning their ministry. In addition, the bishops call those in the ministry to continue this formation throughout their years of ministry. To help persons identify what is necessary, the bishops of California have set guidelines for catechist certification.

The Diocese of Sacramento commits to providing quality education and formation leading to the certification of catechists in accordance with the Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate (1996). Outlined here is the course of studies offered by the Department of Catholic Faith Formation and Catholic School Department.

There are many paths leading to certification as a catechist. Potential catechists may be enrolled in university courses, may participate in other Diocesan offerings, parish adult education programs, or other Catholic Faith Formation, Catholic School Department approved programs.

Catechesis, distinct from the primary proclamation of the Gospel promotes and matures initial conversion, educates the convert in the faith and incorporates the person into the Christian community. (General Directory for Catechesis, 61)

Diocese of Sacramento Department of Catholic Faith Formation & Catholic School Department Requirements for Formation and Certification of Catechists

September 2003

In April 1996, the Bishops of the California Catholic Conference agreed upon revised Guidelines for the Formation and Certification of Catechists and Master Catechists.

Requirements for certification in the Diocese of Sacramento are:

The Selection and Formation of Catechists

Pastors and catechetical leadership in parishes and schools have the duty to:

- A. Screen candidates and evaluate their potential to become faith-filled and dynamic catechists
- B. Require candidates to complete the formation program for Catechist Certification as sponsored/developed by the diocese within the time period specified by the diocese
- C. Select, orient, commission, supervise and annually evaluate catechists
- D. Provide catechists with opportunities for continued personal, spiritual and professional development

Course of Studies to Obtain a Basic Catechist Certificate

The course of studies is consistent with the General Directory for Catechesis, National Catechetical Directory and carefully follows the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Doctrinal Development

Profession of Faith - at least eight hours of study to include: Revelation in Scripture and Tradition/Faith Response Trinity and the Image of God Christology and Redemption Church/Mary and the Saints

Celebration of the Christian Mystery - at least eight hours of study to include: Paschal Mystery/Liturgy Sacramental Theology Sacraments of Initiation Sacraments of Healing/Sacraments at the Service of Communion

Expiration and Renewal

Certification expires at the end of four (4) years from the date of issue. The bishops' guidelines call for the following criteria for renewal:

1. Completion of at least ten (10) hours annually in the above mentioned content areas. It is strongly recommended that Church History and Scripture be included in renewal hours.
2. The choice of courses must have the prior approval of the Department of Catholic Faith Formation and Catholic School Department.
3. Application for renewal.

Catechist Formation Opportunities

Basic Formation Course

Series of classes offered at local sites with the approval of the diocesan Departments of Catholic Faith Formation and the Catholic Schools. These classes follow guidelines prepared by the Bishops of California for the formation and certification of catechists. Contact the Department of Catholic Faith Formation for a list of Master Catechists available for presentations.

Echoes of Faith

A video-assisted program for catechist formation. Thirteen videos, when accompanied by the reflection and discussion in the workbook, cover the requirements for Basic Catechist Certification. Videos are available for use from the Department of Catholic Faith Formation.

University of Dayton Catechist Formation Program

Seven group sessions of at least one and a half hours are based on articles published in *Catechist* magazine. A group should consist of at least three people and have an appointed leader. The leader will receive a comprehensive guide with everything needed to facilitate the process. Eleven courses are available. Samples of the program are available at the Department of Catholic Faith Formation. To order materials, call 1-800-558-2292x140.

STEP (Satellite Theological Education Program) University of Notre Dame

Two styles of online certificate courses, graduate courses, and e-Seminars are offered. Twelve 50-minute video lectures are available from the diocese. Courses fees, and the video lecture series are outlined at <http://step.nd.edu>. *The Diocese of Sacramento's affiliation with STEP provides a 20% discount on student fees.*

Local Workshops

Pre-approval from the Department of Faith Formation and the Catholic School Department is required for catechist certification credit. Forms are available on-line.