



# CATECHIST CERTIFICATION RESOURCE HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT of  
**EVANGELIZATION** +  
*and* CATECHESIS

OFFICE of  
**MARRIAGE + FAMILY**



DIOCESE of  
COLUMBUS

April 8, 2024

Feast of the Annunciation

Dear Fellow Catechist,

I am pleased to introduce the Diocese of Columbus Department of Evangelization Catechist Formation Resource Handbook. The objective of this resource is to assist the evangelist-catechist to serve as an effective pedagogical witness and teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. St. John Paul II echoes this gift when he describes that the aim of all Catechetical instruction is to place the student in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. (Catechesis In Our Time, 5, 20)

Another central tenet of this resource is to assist catechists in their formation as practitioners of the Catholic faith that will allow them to draw the student toward a closer relationship with Jesus per the teachings of the Catholic Church as articulated through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The journey toward catechist formation may at times prove spiritually, mentally, and logistically challenging. We hope that this new resource will help all catechists develop a more profound awareness of their vital role as both evangelists and catechists to all families within their parish communities.

The premise of this new formation process is to provide the necessary catechetical foundation in the proclamation of the kerygma, catechetical practice, content, method, and a concise awareness of proper doctrinal application of the faith to foster a clearer and deeper understanding of the role and mission of the catechists within the Diocese of Columbus.

Certification can be achieved in three levels: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.

**Beginner:** Courses offered by the Department of Evangelization

✦ **Intermediate:** Courses offered by Franciscan University Catechetical Institute

✦ **Advanced:** Degrees Programs from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio Dominican University, or Catholic Distance University

The journey toward catechist formation may at times prove spiritually, mentally, and logistically challenging. We hope that this new resource will help all catechists develop a more profound awareness of their vital role as both evangelists and catechists to the faithful within their parish communities.

I appreciate your willingness to serve the people of God to further the catechetical mission of the Diocese of Columbus in the proclamation of Jesus Christ to the faithful. May St. Francis De Sales patron of the Diocese of Columbus guide us in our ministry as evangelists and catechists and may our Blessed Mother Mary intercede and protect us in our work for the salvation of souls.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Marlon De La Torre  
Senior Director for the Department of Evangelization  
Catholic Diocese of Columbus

APOSTOLIC LETTER  
ISSUED “MOTU PROPRIO”  
BY THE SUPREME PONTIFF

**FRANCIS**  
**“ANTIQUUM MINISTERIUM”**

INSTITUTING  
THE MINISTRY OF CATECHIST

1. The ministry of Catechist in the Church is an ancient one. Theologians commonly hold that the first examples are already present in the writings of the New Testament. The service of catechesis may be traced back to those “teachers” mentioned by the Apostle in writing to the community of Corinth: “Some people God has designated in the Church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:28-31).

Saint Luke begins his Gospel by stating: “I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received” (Lk 1:3-4). The evangelist seems to be well aware that his writings offer a specific form of instruction that can give firm assurance to those already baptized. The Apostle Paul, for his part, tells the Galatians that: “one who is being instructed in the word should share all good things with his instructor” (Gal 6:6). As is evident, this text provides yet another detail; it speaks of the communion of life as a sign of the fruitfulness of an authentic catechesis.

2. From the beginning, the Christian community was characterized by many different forms of ministry carried out by men and women who, obedient to the working of the Holy Spirit, devoted their lives to the building up of the Church. At times, the charisms that the Spirit constantly pours out on the baptized took on a visible and tangible form of immediate service to the Christian community, one recognized as an indispensable *diakonia* for the community. The Apostle Paul authoritatively attests to this when he states that “there are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes” (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Within the broader charismatic tradition of the New Testament, then, we can see that certain baptized persons exercised the ministry of transmitting in a more organic and stable form related to different situations in

life the teaching of the apostles and evangelists (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei [Verbum](#), 8). The Church wished to acknowledge this service as a concrete expression of a personal charism that contributed greatly to the exercise of her mission of evangelization. This glance at the life of the first Christian communities engaged in the spread of the Gospel also encourages the Church in our day to appreciate possible new ways for her to remain faithful to the word of the Lord so that his Gospel can be preached to every creature.

3. The history of evangelization over the past two millennia clearly shows the effectiveness of the mission of catechists. Bishops, priests, and deacons, together with many men and women in the consecrated life, devoted their lives to catechetical instruction so that the faith might be an effective support for the life of every human being. Some of them also gathered around themselves others of their brothers and sisters sharing the same charism, and founded religious orders wholly dedicated to catechesis.

Nor can we forget the countless laymen and women who directly took part in the spread of the Gospel through catechetical instruction. Men and women of deep faith, authentic witnesses of holiness, who in some cases were also founders of Churches and eventually died as martyrs. In our own day too, many competent and dedicated catechists are community leaders in various parts of the world and carry out a mission invaluable for the transmission and growth of the faith. The long line of blessed, saints, and martyrs who were catechists has significantly advanced the Church's mission and deserves to be recognized, for it represents a rich resource not only for catechesis but also for the entire history of Christian spirituality.

4. Beginning with the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Church has come to a renewed appreciation of the importance of lay involvement in the work of evangelization. The Council Fathers repeatedly emphasized the great need for the lay faithful to be engaged directly, in the various ways their charism can be expressed, in the "*plantatio Ecclesiae*" and the development of the Christian community. "Worthy of praise to is that army of catechists, both men, and women, to whom missionary work among the nations is so indebted, who imbued with an apostolic spirit make an outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church by their great work. In our days, when there are so few clerics to evangelize such great multitudes and to carry out the pastoral ministry, the role of catechists is of the highest importance" (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity [Ad Gentes](#), 17).

Along with the important teaching of the Council, mention should be made of the constant interest of the Popes, the Synod of Bishops, the Episcopal Conferences, and individual Bishops who, in recent decades have contributed to a significant renewal of catechesis. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Apostolic Exhortation [Catechesi Tradendae](#), the *General Catechetical Directory*, the [General Directory for Catechesis](#), and the recent *Directory for Catechesis*, as well as the many national, regional, and diocesan Catechisms, have confirmed the centrality of a catechesis that gives priority to the education and ongoing formation of believers.

5. Without prejudice to the Bishop's mission as the primary catechist in his Diocese, one which he shares with his presbyterate, or to the particular responsibility of parents for the Christian formation of their children (cf. CIC can. 774 §2; CCEO can. 618), recognition should be given to those lay men and women who feel called

by virtue of their baptism to cooperate in the work of catechesis (cf. CIC can. 225; CCEO cans. 401 and 406). This presence is all the more urgently needed today as a result of our increasing awareness of the need for evangelization in the contemporary world (cf. Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 163-168), and the rise of a globalized culture (cf. Encyclical Letter [Fratelli Tutti](#), 100, 138). This requires genuine interaction with young people, to say nothing of the need for creative methodologies and resources capable of adapting the proclamation of the Gospel to the missionary transformation that the Church has undertaken. Fidelity to the past and responsibility for the present are necessary conditions for the Church to carry out her mission in the world.

Awakening personal enthusiasm on the part of all the baptized and reviving the awareness of their call to carry out a proper mission in the community demands attentiveness to the voice of the Spirit, who is unfailingly present and fruitful (cf. CIC can. 774 §1; CCEO can. 617). Today, too, the Spirit is calling men and women to set out and encounter all those who are waiting to discover the beauty, goodness, and truth of the Christian faith. It is the task of pastors to support them in this process and to enrich the life of the Christian community through the recognition of lay ministries capable of contributing to the transformation of society through the “penetration of Christian values into the social, political and economic sectors” ([Evangelii Gaudium](#), 102).

6. The lay apostolate is unquestionably “secular”. It requires that the laity “seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will” (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [Lumen Gentium](#), 31). In their daily life, interwoven with family and social relationships, the laity come to realize that they “are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth” ([ibid.](#), 33). We do well to remember, however, that in addition to this apostolate, “the laity can be called in different ways to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy, like those men and women who helped the apostle Paul in the Gospel, working hard in the Lord” ([ibid.](#)).

The role played by catechists is one specific form of service among others within the Christian community. Catechists are called first to be experts in the pastoral service of transmitting the faith as it develops through its different stages from the initial proclamation of the *kerygma* to the instruction that presents our new life in Christ and prepares for the sacraments of Christian initiation, and then to the ongoing formation that can allow each person to give an accounting of the hope within them (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). At the same time, every catechist must be a witness to the faith, a teacher and mystagogue, a companion and pedagogue, who teaches for the Church. Only through prayer, study, and direct participation in the life of the community can they grow in this identity and the integrity and responsibility that it entails (cf. Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 113).

7. With great foresight, Saint Paul VI issued the Apostolic Letter *Ministeria Quaedam* with the intention not only of adapting the ministries of Lector and Acolyte to changed historical circumstances (cf. Apostolic Letter [Spiritus Domini](#)) but also of encouraging Episcopal Conferences to promote other ministries, including that of Catechist. “In addition to the ministries common to the entire Latin Church, nothing prevents Episcopal Conferences from asking the Apostolic See for the institution of others, which for particular reasons, they consider necessary or very useful in their own region. Among these are, for example, the offices of Porter,

Exorcist and Catechist.” The same pressing invitation is found in the Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii Nuntiandi](#); in calling for a discernment of the present needs of the Christian community in faithful continuity with its origins, the Pope encouraged the development of new forms of ministry for a renewed pastoral activity. “Such ministries, apparently new but closely tied up with the Church’s living experience down the centuries, such as that of catechists... are valuable for the establishment, life, and growth of the Church, and for her capacity to influence her surroundings and to reach those who are remote from her” (SAINT PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii Nuntiandi](#), 73).

To be sure, “there has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can indeed count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis, and the celebration of the faith” ([Evangelii Gaudium](#), 102). It follows that the reception of a lay ministry such as that of Catechist will emphasize even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptized person, a commitment that must however be carried out in a fully “secular” manner, avoiding any form of clericalization.

8. This ministry has a definite vocational aspect, as evidenced by the Rite of Institution, and consequently calls for due discernment on the part of the Bishop. It is in fact a stable form of service rendered to the local Church in accordance with pastoral needs identified by the local Ordinary, yet one carried out as a work of the laity, as demanded by the very nature of the ministry. It is fitting that those called to the instituted ministry of Catechist be men and women of deep faith and human maturity, active participants in the life of the Christian community, capable of welcoming others, being generous, and living a life of fraternal communion. They should also receive suitable biblical, theological, pastoral, and pedagogical formation to be competent communicators of the truth of the faith and they should have some prior experience of catechesis (cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church [Christus Dominus](#), 14; CIC can. 231 §1; CCEO can. 409 §1). It is essential that they be faithful co-workers with priests and deacons, prepared to exercise their ministry wherever it may prove necessary, and motivated by true apostolic enthusiasm.

Therefore, after having taken all things into consideration, and by apostolic authority

### **I establish the lay ministry of Catechist**

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments will soon publish the Rite of Institution of the lay ministry of Catechist.

9. I invite the Episcopal Conferences to render effective the ministry of Catechist, determining the necessary process of formation and the normative criteria for admission to this ministry and devising the most appropriate forms for the service which these men and women will be called to exercise in conformity with the content of this Apostolic Letter.

10. The Synods of the Oriental Churches or the Assemblies of Hierarchs may adopt what is established here for their respective Churches *sui iuris*, in accordance with their particular law.

11. Bishops should make every effort to comply with the exhortation of the Council Fathers: “Pastors... know that they were not established by Christ to undertake by themselves the entire saving mission of the Church to the world. They appreciate, rather, that it is their exalted task to shepherd the faithful and at the same time acknowledge their ministries and charisms so that all in their separate ways, but of one mind, may cooperate in the common task” (*Lumen Gentium*, 30). May the discernment of the gifts that the Holy Spirit never fails to grant to the Church sustain their efforts to make the lay ministry of Catechist effective for the growth of their communities.

I order that what has been laid down by this Apostolic Letter issued “*Motu Proprio*” have firm and stable effect, anything to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of special mention, and that it be promulgated by publication in *L'Osservatore Romano*, taking effect that same day, and published thereafter in the official commentary of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

*Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on the tenth day of May in the year 2021, the liturgical memorial of Saint John of Avila, Priest and Doctor of the Church, the ninth of my Pontificate. Franciscus*

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## INTRODUCTION

St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesis In Our Time* reminds us that 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 (Catechesis In Our Time, 5)

Christ the *Divine Teacher* is the catechist par excellence who serves as our model of faith in word and deed. We find definitive evidence of his identity as the Divine Teacher in the Gospels where Jesus is seen “day after day sitting in the temple teaching” (Mt 6:25; 24:1-14; Lk. 14:15; 20:1-8).

Jesus’ teaching was central to His missionary mandate on earth to save mankind from the pain of sin and death and open the gateway to Heaven. The proclamation of his own Word involved catechetical instruction to anyone who would listen to the Son of the Word made flesh. At the heart of instruction was the development of an intimate union with Him in love.

Effective and formational catechetical instruction involves the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma (proclamation) to arouse faith; apologetics or examination of the reasons for beliefs; experience of Christian living; celebration of the sacraments; integration onto the ecclesial community; apostolic and missionary witness (Catechesis In Our Time, 18)

The process of lay catechist certification will be a pillar of the catechetical efforts for all lay faithful in the Diocese of Columbus. As certification for catechists are based on local standards, certification of the Lay Minister of Catechist will be based on internal standards set forth by the Department of Evangelization. The standards are meant to provide the lay catechist an opportunity to receive proper formation and instruction in the areas of evangelization and catechesis to effectively proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hand on the doctrinal teachings of the Catholic Church in a clear and cogent way.

*God did not create you because He had any need of you, for you are wholly useless to Him, but only that He might exercise towards you His goodness, bestowing on you His grace and glory. To accomplish this, he has given you an understanding to know Him, a memory to remember Him, a will to love Him, an imagination to recall His mercies, eyes to see the wonders of His works, a tongue to praise Him, and so with all your other faculties. Therefore, being created and placed in the world for this purpose, you should avoid and reject all actions which are contrary to it; and despise as idle and superfluous all which do not promote it. - St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life*

# SECTION 1.0: CERTIFICATION BY THE DIOCESAN DEPARTMENT OF EVANGELIZATION

## *1.1 Purpose of the Certification Resource Handbook*

The purpose of this Certification Resource is to provide information about the steps and requirements necessary for certification and renewal of certification if the catechist chooses to participate in this process.

Certification in the Diocese of Columbus:

- Ensures appropriate education and formation for ministry
- Encourages professional qualities in Catechists
- Recognizes those who have the classes, credentials, experience, and competence necessary for lay ministry; to be recognized as professional catechetical leaders within the Church

## *1.2 Diocesan Recommendations Regarding Certification (Volunteer and Professional)*

As of March 2024, the revised certification policy requires those seeking catechist certification at the parish level to receive their catechetical, doctrinal, liturgical, pastoral, and theological formation through the Department of Evangelization. The Department of Evangelization will offer a three-fold process to form and train the faithful of the Diocese of Columbus. This catechist certification process will be available to all parish staff and volunteers.

Catechist certification can be achieved in three levels **Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.**

- **Beginner Level Catechist Certification:** Courses offered by the Department of Evangelization
- **Intermediate Level Catechist Certification:** Department of Evangelization Tracks offered by Franciscan University Catechetical Institute
- **Advanced Level Catechist Certification:** Degree Programs from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio Dominican University, or Catholic Distance University, transcripts from other institutions will be reviewed

Certification received applies only to the Diocese of Columbus. *Certification from an arch/diocese is not automatically portable to another arch/diocese.* A review of the process of certification from previous diocesan certification and other arch/dioceses is considered for equivalencies.

Certification does not mean that a certified lay minister is guaranteed a position within the Diocese of Columbus. Likewise, it is not automatic that one who begins the certification process will be certified.

“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.”

Catechesis In Our Time, 5

## SECTION 2.0: BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

### CANON (CIC), # 231 OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW REMINDS US THAT:

*“lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so that they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfill this role.”*

#### ***The Directory for Catechesis reminds us that:***

*Formation is an ongoing process that, under the guidance of the Spirit and in the living womb of the Christian community, helps the baptized person to take shape, which means unveiling his deepest identity which is that of being a son of God in profound communion with his brothers. The work of formation acts as a transformation of the person who internalizes the evangelical message existentially and in such a way that it may be light and guidance for his ecclesial life and mission. (DC ,131)*

#### **2.1 Benefits to the Diocese of Columbus**

The certification process offers the candidate the education, formation, and professional skills necessary to serve in a particular ministerial-catechetical role. This process provides an opportunity to grow and be prepared for the work of the New Evangelization.

#### **2.2 Benefits to Academic Institutions**

The certification process enhances collaboration with academic institutions such as Franciscan University Catechetical Institute, and other accredited colleges and institutions-where applicable.

#### **2.3 Benefits to Mentors of Candidates**

Mentors benefit from certification by being afforded the opportunity to pass on their wisdom, knowledge, and passion for service within the Diocese. Oftentimes, mentors also benefit from new concepts and ideas from those whom they are mentoring.

#### **2.4 Benefits to Catechists**

Certification recognizes and validates the specific vocation of a lay catechist. Lay catechists are recognized as well-prepared in their particular area of catechetical ministry. The process allows for self-reflection and discernment necessary for all in ministry.

#### **2.5 Benefits to Agencies, Institutions, and Parish Communities**

Certification benefits agencies, institutions, and parishes by assuring that each certified person has met the criteria for certification. This process provides pastors and other leaders with a pool of certified leaders with specialized competencies.

## SECTION 3.0

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

There are several requirements that a candidate for certification must adhere to. The candidate must be a fully initiated active practicing Catholic who demonstrates a visible desire to live out the call of Christian discipleship, has cleared appropriate background checks, completed Diocesan safe environments programs, and received an endorsement from their pastor to begin the certification process.

#### 3.1 Verification of Reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation

Candidates for certification must submit an original Baptismal certificate to the office for the candidate's file. Original Baptismal certificates can be obtained by contacting the parish office of the church where the candidate was baptized. If the parish has closed, the (arch) diocesan archives will have them.

#### 3.2 Verification of Catholic Marriage

It is essential to the integrity of ministry that, if married, lay catechists are validly married within the Catholic Church.

#### 3.3 Catechetical-Theological Formation Requirements and Level Structure

##### *Beginner-Level Catechist Certification*

Courses offered by the Department of Evangelization (Note: Please see section 5.3 on specific courses offered by the Department of Evangelization)

##### *Intermediate Level Catechist Certification*

Department of Evangelization Tracks offered by Franciscan University Catechetical Institute

##### *Advanced Level Catechist Certification*

**Bachelor's Degree:** Bachelor's Degree in Catechetics, Theology, Religious Studies, Pastoral Studies, or its equivalent. Primary formation through Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio Dominican University, or Catholic Distance University. Transcripts from other institutions will be reviewed.

**Master's Degree:** Master's Degree in Catechetics, Theology, Religious Studies, Pastoral Studies, or its equivalent. Primary formation through Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio Dominican University, or Catholic Distance University. Transcripts from other institutions will be reviewed.

#### 3.4 Assessment of Formal Education Requirements

The Diocese of Columbus Department of Evangelization will provide an assessment of all theological competencies for certification where applicable. The certification structure as well as certification courses is based on the certification requirements of the Department of Evangelization. Transcripts from other academic institutions/institutes/etc., are evaluated by the Associate Director for the Department of Evangelization and the Senior Director for the Department of Evangelization.

### **3.5 Adherence to the Diocesan Pastoral Code of Conduct**

Adopted by the Diocese of Columbus, the code of conduct outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for all clergy, employees, and volunteers and all are expected to adhere to the stated practices.

Each volunteer and paid staff person pursuing certification must complete a criminal background check and attend a Protecting God's Children Workshop.

### **3.6 Participation in Diocesan Workshops and Events**

Several Diocesan-sponsored events are beneficial to all in the ministry. It is important, both for initial certification and ongoing formation for certification renewal, that attendance at Diocesan functions be a priority. Here are some recommended functions:

- Parish Staff and Ministry Leader Day
- Evangelization Leadership Summit
- Franciscan University St. John Bosco Conference
- OCIA Formation Days
- Marriage and Family Formation Days
- Catechist Formation Days
- Parish Staff and Ministry Leader Lenten Retreat
- Department of Evangelization Catechetical Days of Reflection, Lenten and Advent Retreats

### **3.7 Participation in Professional Organizations**

Candidates for certification are encouraged to join national, Diocesan, or regional organizations, such as the National Association of Catholic Family Life, Franciscan University of Steubenville St. John Bosco Guild, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministers, etc. Participation in such formational gatherings counts toward enrichment hours for renewal of certification.

## SECTION 4.0

# CERTIFICATION STANDARDS (GENERAL CRITERIA)

Catechist Formation/certification standards for the Diocese of Columbus Department of Evangelization are based on the *Criteria of Formation* established by the Department of Evangelization and the *Dimensions of Formation* as outlined in the new *Directory for Catechesis from the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization*. The Directory for Catechesis will serve as a central catechetical guide of the Diocese of Columbus to evaluate all aspects of Catechist Formation.

### Criteria for Formation-Directory for Catechesis, 135

#### 4.1 First Criteria: Spirituality of Mission and Evangelization

It is vital that the whole formative process be permeated by the centrality of spiritual experience from a missionary perspective.

*The Catechist should be formed:*

1.1 As a missionary disciple capable of starting out ever new from his experience of God, who sends him to join his brothers on their journey.

#### 4.2 Second Criteria: Catechesis as Integral Formation

This is a matter for forming catechists so as to be able to transmit not only a teaching but also an integral Christian formation, be developing tasks of initiation, of education, and of teaching.

*The Catechist must be able to:*

2.1 Be at one and the same time, teachers, educators, and witnesses of the faith . . . drawn by the catechumenal experience and based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and a comprehensive vision of the Christian life through the catechumenal process.

#### 4.3 Third Criteria: Accompaniment

The Church feels the duty of forming its catechists in the art of personal accompaniment, both by proposing to them the experience of being accompanied in order to grow in discipleship, and by enabling them and sending them to accompany their brothers.

*The Catechist will:*

3.1 reside in the proximity, in the unconditional acceptance and in the gratuitousness with which he makes himself available to walk beside others in order to listen to them and explain the Scriptures see: Lk 24:13-35; Acts 8:26-39

#### 4.4 Fourth Criteria: Consistency Among Formative Styles

As a general criterion, it is necessary to underline the need for a coherence between the general pedagogy of formation of catechists and the pedagogy proper to the catechetical process. It would be very difficult for the

catechist in his activity to improvise a style and a sensibility to which he had not been introduced during his own formation.

#### **4.5 Fifth Criteria: An Attitude of Docibilitas of Self-Formation**

It is necessary that the catechist develop docibilitas, meaning the willingness to be touched by grace, by life, by persons in a serene and positive attitude toward reality in order to learn how to learn. Moreover, the willingness for self-formation is what enables the catechist to make a method of formation his own and to be able to apply it to himself and to his ecclesial service.

#### **4.6 Sixth Criteria: The dynamic laboratory**

In a context of the group, as a formative practice in which faith is learned by doing, which means valuing the experience, contributions, and reformulations of each one, in view of transformative learning.

### **THE DIMENSIONS OF FORMATION: DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS, 139-150**

#### **4.7 “Being and Knowing-How to be with”: Human and Christian Maturity and Missionary Awareness.**

- a. the catechist is formed to become a witness of faith and a keeper of the memory of God.
- b. the catechist is called to grow constantly in affective balance, critical sense, inner unity, and freedom, living relationships that support and enrich the faith.
- c. the formation above all, nourishes the spirituality of the catechist, so that his activity springs in truth from his own witness of life.
- d. formation therefore sustains the missionary awareness of the catechist, through the internalization of the demands of the Kingdom that Jesus has manifested.
- e. *knowing-how to be with* is an educational and communicative act, the development of an ecclesial communion-catechesis is relational.
- f. the catechist, in account of his service, holds a position relative to the people he accompanies in the faith and is perceived by them as a point of reference, who exercises a certain form of authority.
- g. it, therefore, becomes necessary that this role be lived out with the most absolute respect for the conscience and person of the other, avoiding every kind of abuse, whether of power, of conscience, financial, or sexual.

#### **4.8 Knowledge: Biblical-Theological Formation and the Understanding of Human Beings and the Social Context.**

- a. The catechist is also a teacher who instructs in the faith. In fact, while making witness his main virtue he does not forget that he is also responsible for the transmission of the ecclesial faith.

b. The assimilation of the content of the faith as wisdom of the faith takes place above all through familiarity with Sacred Scripture and with the study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, of the catechism of the particular Church, of magisterial documents.

c. because of this, it is necessary that the catechist should know:

- The main divisions of salvation history: Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History, in the light of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.
- The essential core of the Christian message and experience: the Creed, the liturgy, and the sacraments, moral life, and prayer.
- The principal elements of the ecclesial Magisterium concerning the proclamation of Gospel and catechesis.

d. In the presentation of the Christian message it is necessary to combine:

- The concise and kerygmatic character to present the Catholic faith in an organic and unified vision that appeals to the human experience.
- The biblical account-the catechist is called to approach Scripture in faith and the Church's tradition so that its words can be perceived as living.
- The catechetical style of theological content.
- The knowledge and discipline of apologetics which shows that faith is not opposed to reason and highlights the truths of a correct anthropology, illuminated by natural reason.

e. Together with fidelity to the message of the faith, the catechist is called to understand human beings in the concrete and in the sociocultural context in which they live.

#### **4.9 Savoir-Faire: Pedagogical and Methodological Formation**

a. The catechist is formed to grow as an educator who facilitates maturation of the faith which catechumens and those being catechized obtain with the help of the Holy Spirit.

b. The catechist, recognizing that his hearer is an active participant in whom the grace of God is dynamically at work, will present himself as a respectful facilitator of an experience of faith of which he is not in charge.

c. The pedagogical formation of the catechist should develop several attitudes in him including:

- .....The capacity of inner freedom and gratuitous, of dedication and consistency to be a credible witness to the faith
- Expertise in the communication and narration of the faith as the ability to present salvation history vitally

so the persons may feel part of it.

- The maturation of an educated mentality implies the willingness to build mature relationships with people and the capacity to guide group dynamics, fostering the activation of learning processes for both individuals and the community.
- The serene handling of educational relationships in their affective capacity, getting in tune with the inner world of the other, and disposing oneself to express one's emotions
- The capacity to prepare an itinerary of faith that consists in considering socio-cultural circumstances; to utilize languages, techniques, and tools with creativity; to make an assessment.

d. As an educator, the catechist is also to have a function of mediating membership in the community and living out catechetical service with an attitude of communion.

## SECTION 5.0

# PROCESS FOR INITIAL CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

### 5.1 Application Process and Requirements for Catechist Certification

Contact the Department of Evangelization to begin your application process for initial catechist certification.

- Must be fully initiated into the Church
- Pastor Reference
- One Personal Reference
- Academic Transcripts for any applicable undergraduate or graduate coursework
- Protecting God's Children Workshop
- Criminal Background check
- Baptismal Certificate Original from the parish of Baptism
- Marriage Certificate if married
- Digital Photograph

### 5.2 Three Levels of Catechist Formation and Certification

Catechist formation and certification can be achieved in three levels **Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.**

***Beginner Level Catechist Certification:*** Courses offered by the Department of Evangelization (Please see: Section 5.3)

***Intermediate Level Catechist Certification:*** Department of Evangelization Tracks offered by Franciscan University Catechetical Institute

***Advanced Level Catechist Certification:*** Degree Programs from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio Dominican University, or Catholic Distance University.

### 5.3 Catechist formation courses offered through the Department of Evangelization

- *What is Catechetics and the Content of Catechesis*
- *Teaching the Story of Salvation through Sacred Scripture*
- *Using the OCIA as a model of instruction*
- *Teaching from the Catechism*
- *Teaching the Liturgy and the Sacraments*
- *Teaching According to Age and Constructing Your Lesson Plan*
- *Introduction to Prayer*

### 5.4 Recommended Catechetical Resources

- *RSV Catholic Edition of Sacred Scripture* Ignatius Press 2nd. Ed.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2nd. Ed. USCCB
- *Catechesis In Our Time*-St. John Paul II

- *Redeemer of Man*-St. John Paul II
- *Creed of the People of God*-St. Paul VI
- *Evangelization in the Modern World*-St. Paul VI
- *General Directory for Catechesis*-Congregation for the Clergy-Vatican
- *Directory for Catechesis*-Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*-Dr. Petroc Wiley, Professor Barbara Morgan; Ignatius Press
- *Jesus the Divine Teacher*-Msgr. Eugene Kevane-Emmaus Road Publications
- *The Deposit of Faith: What the Catholic Church Really Believes*-Msgr. Eugene Kevane
- *Theology for Beginners*-Frank Sheed
- *The First Catechetical Instruction*-St. Augustine
- *Catholicism*-Henri De Lubac
- *Introduction to Christianity*-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger-Pope Benedict XVI
- *The Religious Sense*-Fr. Luigi Giussani
- *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*-Fr. Coleman O'Neil
- *Introduction to the Devout Life*-St. Francis De Sales; Tan Saint Benedict Press
- *Forty Dreams of St. John Bosco*-Tan Books

### 5.5 Celebrating the Conferral of Catechist Certification

All Catechists who complete the Diocesan Certification process will be recognized annually at a Diocesan Mass of celebration presided over by the Bishop who will bless and commission those who have achieved certification or renewed certification within the current Liturgical year.

## **SECTION 6.0 PROCESS FOR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION**

### **6.1 Notification of Renewal**

It is the responsibility of the catechist to keep track of their certification status for renewal. The catechist must contact the Department of Evangelization to initiate the renewal process.

### **6.2 Ongoing Formation Requirements for Renewal**

Several opportunities can count for ongoing formation in certification listed in Section 3.6 Participation in Diocesan Workshops and Events. It is important to keep track of your ongoing formation. Events that do not apply to ongoing formation are events that are not directly for the candidate for renewal. For example, facilitating your own retreat or reading a book does not qualify for ongoing formation.

## **SECTION 7.0 CERTIFICATION RECORDS**

The Department of Evangelization maintains all files/documentation that have been submitted during the certification process and catechists should keep a record on file with their parish.