

STANDARDS FOR PARISH CATECHISTS

In the past, it may have been considered satisfactory for Parish Catechists, like all parishioners, to participate in parish life and to attend to their own progress in the areas of faith knowledge and spirituality. While both of these are vitally important, as Catholic leaders we have come to recognize that they are not sufficient for growth and development as Parish Catechists. All Parish Catechists need planned, regular, on-going, and focused training and assistance in both content and methodology. Therefore, the following program has been developed to aid all Parish Catechists in this important process.

The Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation will assist the parish in determining which positions qualify as "Parish Catechists," but generally speaking, a Parish Catechist is a person who is called to teach the Catholic faith in a formal setting to adults, children, and/or youth in a variety of programs and locations: adult catechetical programs, religious education programs, youth ministry programs, sacramental preparation programs, Christian Initiation programs, family catechetical programs¹, and all other programs "that encourage a living, explicit, and fruitful profession of faith."²

LEVEL I:

Level I Certification for Parish Catechists includes two components:

- theological content, and
- teaching methodology

Theological Content Requirements:

1. All Parish Catechists shall complete 30 hours from approved content-rich offerings within the next 3 years, or for new catechists, within their first 3 years of serving as a Parish Catechist. Content standards and approval criteria are provided in Appendix A.
2. Apart from the three exceptions outlined below, only hours earned after September 1, 2004 will be counted toward completion of these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content (10 hours per year for three years), unless otherwise approved by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
 - a. Parish Catechists who are graduates of the Ministry Formation/Discipleship Formation program are considered to have already completed these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
 - b. Parish Catechists who are graduates of the Certificate in Youth Ministry Program are considered to have already completed these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
 - c. Parish Catechists who have a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in Catholic theology, pastoral studies, theological studies, scripture, religious education, liturgical studies, etc., are considered to have already completed these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of an earned degree must be furnished.

¹ Regarding family catechetical programs, significant and continuing orientation, training, and assistance is expected; but the standards in this document only apply to those who are determined to be "Parish Catechists"

² General Directory for Catechesis, #66.

3. The Pastor or his designee (DRE, ASD Coordinator, RCIA Team Leader, Youth Minister, etc.) must keep the ongoing records for all Parish Catechists. A form will be provided by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for this purpose.

Teaching Methodology Requirements:

1. All Parish Catechists shall complete the four video-based methods modules from *Echoes of Faith* ("Getting Started as a Catechist;" "Roles of the Catechist;" "The Person of the Catechist;" and "Introduction to the Learner"). In addition:
 - a. Parish Catechists shall complete at least one additional video from *Echoes of Faith* or another approved series on age-appropriate catechetical methodology. A listing of approved videos for various age levels is available in Appendix C;
 - or**
 - b. Parish Catechists shall complete an approved offering in age-appropriate catechesis and catechetical methods from the Office of Schools or the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
2. These must be completed within the next 3 years, or for new parish catechists, within the first 3 years of serving as an active Parish Catechist.
3. Apart from the four exceptions outlined below, only modules completed and hours earned after September 1, 2004 will be counted toward completion of these requirements in Teaching Methodology, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
 - a. Parish Catechists who have a valid teaching certificate from any state are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to school-age learners. Proof must be furnished.
 - b. Parish Catechists who are graduates of the Certificate in Youth Ministry Program are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adolescent and young adult learners. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
 - c. Parish Catechists who are currently employed as full-time post-secondary faculty are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adult learners. Proof must be furnished.
 - d. Parish Catechists who have completed the "Beginnings and Beyond" Institute from the North American Forum are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adult learners in the RCIA. Proof of completion must be furnished.
4. The Pastor or his designee (DRE, ASD Coordinator, RCIA Team Leader, Youth Minister, etc.) must keep the ongoing records for all Parish Catechists. A form will be provided by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for this purpose.

General Exceptions to Level I Requirements for Parish Catechists:

1. An individual who achieves Level I Certification for School Catechists from the Diocese of Kalamazoo is considered to have achieved Level I Certification for Parish Catechists as well. Proof of certification must be furnished.
2. Catechists who have previously achieved Basic/Level I Catechist Certification in this or another diocese will be recognized as having achieved the Level I Certification for Catechists. Proof of achievement must be furnished.
3. Catechists who have previously achieved certification in an alternative Catechist certification program (parish-based, internet, third party, etc.) may be recognized as having achieved the Level I Certification for Catechists. Proof of achievement must be furnished and will be evaluated to determine possible equivalency to these standards.
4. Currently existing parish-based catechist certification programs are to be commended and individually evaluated to determine if they are equivalent or nearly equivalent to Level I certification. However, over the next five years, all parish-based certification programs should be gradually aligned to these diocesan standards.
5. Regarding teaching methodology for Level I Certification for Parish Catechists, other materials, whether video-based or not, may be approved by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
6. Other exceptions may be granted only by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.

LEVEL II:

After achieving Level I Certification for Parish Catechists, individuals may choose to seek Level II Certification for Parish Catechists.

Level II Certification for Parish Catechists includes two components:

- theological content, and
- teaching methodology

Theological Content Requirements:

1. Parish Catechists who seek Level II Certification for Parish Catechists must complete the Discipleship Formation Program offered by the Diocese of Kalamazoo.
2. Apart from the three exceptions outlined below, only hours earned in the Discipleship Formation Program will be counted, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
 - a. Parish Catechists who are graduates of a similar program offered by another diocese are considered to have already completed this requirement in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
 - b. Parish Catechists who are graduates of the Certificate in Youth Ministry Program are considered to have already completed this requirement in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.

- c. Parish Catechists who have a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in Catholic theology, pastoral studies, theological studies, scripture, religious education, liturgical studies, etc., are considered to have already completed the 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of an earned degree must be furnished.
3. The Pastor or his designee (DRE, ASD Coordinator, RCIA Team Leader, Youth Minister, etc.) must keep the ongoing records for all Parish Catechists. A form will be provided by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for this purpose.

Teaching Methodology Requirements:

1. Parish Catechists who seek Level II Certification for Parish Catechists must complete an additional 20 hours of non-video based training in Age-appropriate catechesis and catechetical methods provided by or approved by the Office of Schools or the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.
 - a. Parish Catechists who have a valid teaching certificate from any state are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to school-age learners. Proof must be furnished.
 - b. Parish Catechists who are graduates of the Certificate in Youth Ministry Program are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adolescent and young adult learners. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
 - c. Parish Catechists who are currently employed as full-time post-secondary faculty are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adult learners. Proof must be furnished.
 - d. Parish Catechists who have completed the "Beginnings and Beyond" Institute from the North American Forum are considered to have already completed these Teaching Methodology requirements as they apply to adult learners in the RCIA. Proof of completion must be furnished.
2. The Pastor or his designee (DRE, ASD Coordinator, RCIA Team Leader, Youth Minister, etc.) must keep the ongoing records for all Parish Catechists. A form will be provided by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for this purpose.

General Exceptions to Level II Requirements for Parish Catechists:

1. An individual who achieves Level II Certification for School Catechists from the Diocese of Kalamazoo is considered to have achieved Level II Certification for Parish Catechists as well. Proof of certification must be furnished.
2. Catechists who have previously achieved Advanced/Level II Catechist Certification in this or another diocese will be recognized as having achieved the Level II Certification for Catechists. Proof of achievement must be furnished.
3. Catechists who have previously achieved advanced certification in an alternative Catechist certification program (parish-based, internet, third party, etc.) may be recognized as having achieved the Level II Certification for Catechists. Proof of achievement must be furnished and will be evaluated to determine possible equivalency to these standards.

4. Other exceptions may be granted only by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation.

ONGOING CERTIFICATION:

1. After achieving either Level I Certification or Level II Certification, active Parish Catechists are expected to maintain their knowledge base by completing 5 hours annually in either "Theological Content" or "Teaching Methodology" from the offerings of the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation and/or the Office of Schools.
2. For those who have completed Level I Certification, the hours used for ongoing certification may be used toward meeting the requirements for Level II Certification.
3. The Pastor or his designee (DRE, ASD Coordinator, RCIA Team Leader, Youth Minister, etc.) must keep the ongoing records for all Parish Catechists. A form will be provided by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for this purpose.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

By May 1st of each year, the Pastor or his designee must send a photocopy of the form for all active catechists to the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation for input into the catechetical certification database.

Those catechists who have achieved either Level I or Level II Certification for Parish Catechists will be invited to and publicly recognized at our banquet each June and issued a certificate.

LISTING OF OFFERINGS:

In order to ensure that catechists have the opportunity to meet certification requirements, the diocesan Office of Schools and the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, Initiation will jointly publish a list of approved events/offerings/classes three times a year. A listing of these events/offerings/classes will also be available on the diocesan website.

Some of the requirements and wording above were adapted from the "Catechist Certification Process" of the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan
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