



OFFICE OF  
EVANGELIZATION  
AND CATECHESIS

## **GUIDE FOR CATECHETICAL LEADERS**

### ***Administering Catechist Certification***

#### **CATECHETICAL LEADER'S ROLE**

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (USCCB, 2005) points out that one of the main responsibilities of catechetical leaders (Directors of Religious Education, Coordinators of Religious Education, Associates of Religious Educations, and Catholic School Principals) is the formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists (pp. 224-225). Catechetical leaders supervise the formation and education of catechists so that they become competent in their ministry. The catechist certification process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is designed to help catechists achieve this goal, but its effectiveness depends upon the commitment of both catechetical leaders and catechists. This document explains the catechetical leader's role in implementing the archdiocesan catechist certification process.

When recruiting catechists, catechetical leaders should clearly convey their expectations regarding catechist certification. Catechists should know that the parish/school will support them as they pursue certification by providing opportunities to meet the requirements. Catechetical leaders should notify catechists about courses and workshops offered throughout their area and on the internet. Principals should inform religion teachers that current catechist certification is required for school accreditation. Catechetical leaders will encourage and advise catechists as they move toward certification. Once catechists have taken the courses and workshops required for certification or re-certification at the Basic, General, or Advanced level, catechetical leaders:

1. Conduct observations of catechetical sessions
2. Interview the catechists
3. Help the catechists prepare the Plan of Study for Further Growth & Enrichment
4. Complete and sign the application forms
5. Mail the applications and fees to the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis in their region (Cincinnati, Dayton, or Sidney).

#### **ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS**

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis (OEC) shares the task of administering the catechist certification process with parish catechetical leaders. The OEC developed the learning objectives for all of the courses required for certification. Catechetical leaders may request a complete copy of these objectives if they wish. They must seek approval from the OEC before offering live courses or video-assisted courses. The process for obtaining approval is outlined in the annual [OEC "Practices and Procedures"](#) document available on our web site.. The archdiocesan [Media Centers](#) supply the materials for the video-assisted courses. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati partners with the University of Dayton's [Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation](#) to provide on-line courses for catechists. The OEC maintains course attendance records and files of approved certification application forms.

The OEC supports catechetical leaders by regularly posting on its web site a [calendar of courses and workshops](#) that can be used to complete the Knowledge and Skills components of the certification process. The OEC and the Worship Office publish a [calendar of RCIA workshops](#) for those pursuing certification as RCIA catechists.

## AREAS OF CATECHIST DEVELOPMENT-KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Competent catechists must understand the doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Church so that they may accurately explain our beliefs and practices to those they are catechizing. Completion of the theological learning modules ensures that catechists have sufficient knowledge of the faith to properly exercise their ministry.

Skills represent those teaching behaviors that characterize good catechesis. Catechetical leaders, possessing these skills themselves, can aid their catechists to improve their ability to nurture the faith life of the adults, adolescents, and children whom they teach. Beginning catechists gain fundamental skills by taking the two required and two elective workshops which comprise “Introduction to Catechetical Ministry” and by attending the Prayer Workshop. Those catechists seeking General or Advanced Certification can attain additional skills through participation in the remaining workshops of the “Introduction to Catechetical Ministry” series. Individual parishes or parish clusters may arrange workshops tailored to the needs of their catechists. The annual Northern Area Congress, the Ohio Catholic Education Association (OCEA) Convention, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention, institutes sponsored by the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, and archdiocesan RCIA workshops offer many opportunities for enhancing catechists’ skills. Those catechists who are professional teachers may have acquired several skills through the Education courses they took for their degree. Experience as a catechist is required for certification since catechists need to demonstrate the skills relevant to their ministry.

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORMS

[Click here](#) for sample completed application form for General Certification.

1. **First page:** Fill in all spaces with the information requested.
2. **Second page:**
  - a) **Skills**-List the names of the skills in the first column. In the second column list the titles of the learning experiences by which the skills were acquired, how the learning experiences occurred (live, video-assisted, on-line, etc.), the names of the instructors/facilitators, and the locations. In the third column, put the dates of the learning experiences.
  - b) **Experience**-State where the applicant has gained the experience and give a time frame, e.g., St. Mary Parish from 9/2007-present.
  - c) **Knowledge**-In the first column, list the titles of the theological learning modules. In the second column put the places the courses were taken, how they were taken (live, video-assisted, on-line, college course), and the names of the instructors/facilitators. In the third column, put the dates when the courses were offered.

- d) **Formation**-In the first column, describe the formation activities. In the second column give the location and frequency. In the third column put the dates (if appropriate) or the months and years.
  - e) **Observation of a Catechetical Session**-In the second column state who conducted the observation and where it took place. Put the observation date in the third column.
  - f) **Interview with Catechetical Leader**-In the second column write the name of the catechetical leader who conducted the interview. Place the date of the interview in the third column.
  - g) **Plan of Study for Further Growth and Enrichment**-In the second column state that this was prepared. Put the date of preparation in the third column.
3. The catechetical leader signs the completed application form and makes a copy of the form to keep in the parish/school files. The catechetical leader then mails the original form along with the application fee to the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis in his/her region of the archdiocese (Cincinnati, Dayton, Sidney). Applications can be submitted at any time.
  4. After processing the application, the OEC mails the catechist's certificate to the catechetical leader who obtains the pastor's signature, makes a copy of the certificate for the parish files, and gives the original to the catechist.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What kinds of experiences meet the skills requirements for General and Advanced certification?

The skills outcomes demand some interpretation on the part of the catechetical leader and catechist. There are no specific skills workshops required. Catechists may take more of the elective workshops from the "Introduction to Catechetical Ministry" series. They are free to choose learning experiences that have some concrete learning outcomes. The catechetical leader should be able to verify the accomplishment of these skills outcomes through examining the catechist's lesson plan and conducting the observation and interview. This verification is somewhat subjective but it ensures that the learning experience was translated into real catechetical skills.

### 2. If a parish or school does not have a certified catechetical leader, who supervises catechist certification? Who observes and interviews catechists and signs their applications?

"Each parish and school must have a designated catechetical leader" (Archdiocese of Cincinnati Religious Education Policy #2000.01). This person may be a certified DRE, CRE, ARE, or Principal (Level 3). In the absence of a catechetical leader, the pastor may assume this responsibility. The parish or school may choose to hire a certified catechetical leader from outside the parish to perform one or more of the administrative functions of the process.

**3. How recent must my theology courses be in order to fulfill the requirements for the theological areas of study?**

All courses must be consistent with the theology of Vatican Council II and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and fulfill the objectives of the learning modules in question. When catechetical leaders are not sure that a course counts, they should contact their consultant in the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

**4. How do I decide what fulfills the requirements for formation? Is a specific number of hours required?**

The primary expectation is that the activity provides an opportunity for deepening a catechist's faith and promoting his/her spiritual growth. See the OEC web site for a list of possible [spiritual formation activities](#). A specific number of hours is not required. The catechetical leader decides what is acceptable based on each individual situation after discussing the topic with the catechist.

**5. Are catechists of adults expected to pursue certification?**

Yes. Teachers of religion, whether full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer, in parish religious education programs, Catholic elementary schools or the RCIA are to comply with the process for becoming certified as a catechist (Archdiocesan Religious Education Policy #2001.03).

**6. If a catechist is certified in another diocese, is his/her certificate transferable?**

Many dioceses have catechist certification programs that are comparable to that of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. A consultant from the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will compare the catechist's records to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati certification requirements and decide which type of certification it corresponds to. If the catechist achieved the highest level of certification in another diocese, an Advanced certificate from our archdiocese will be granted.