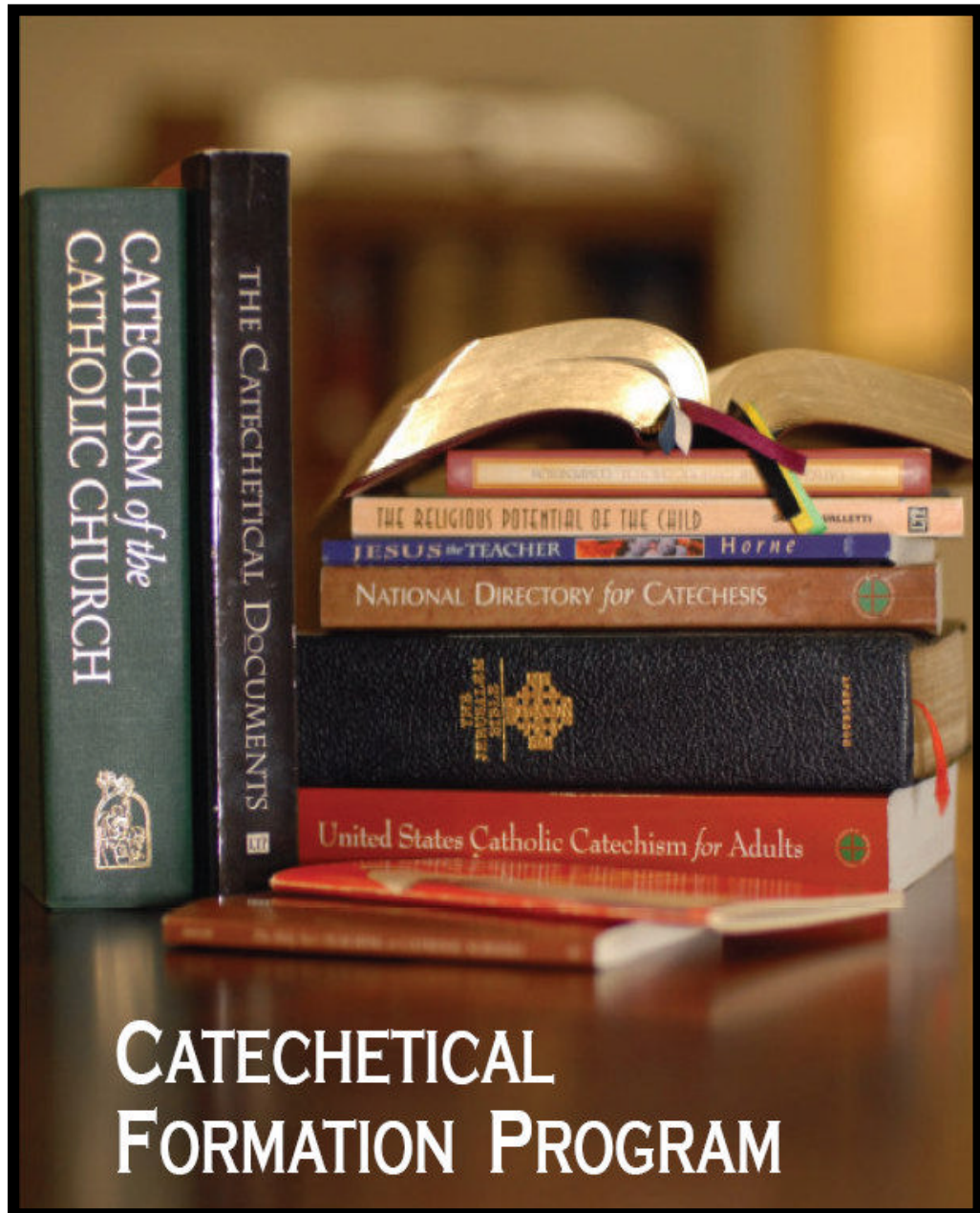


DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE  
Office of Religious Education

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# **Catechetical Leader Manual**

## Abbreviations

<b>AG</b>	<i>Ad Gentes (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)</i>
<b>CCA</b>	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church for Adults</i>
<b>CCC</b>	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
<b>CD</b>	<i>Christus Dominus (The Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church)</i>
<b>CE</b>	<i>Divini Illius Magistri (Christian Education)</i>
<b>CL</b>	<i>Christifidelis Laici (The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World)</i>
<b>CT</b>	<i>Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in Our Time)</i>
<b>EA</b>	<i>Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)</i>
<b>EN</b>	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the Modern World)</i>
<b>FD</b>	<i>Fidei Depositum (On the Publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church)</i>
<b>GC</b>	<i>Guide for Catechists (Document on Vocational, Formative and Promotional Orientation of Catechists in the Territories Dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples)</i>
<b>GDC</b>	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i>
<b>LG</b>	<i>Lumen Gentium (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)</i>
<b>NDC</b>	<i>National Directory for Catechesis</i>
<b>PO</b>	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis (The Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests)</i>
<b>RCIA</b>	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
<b>RDECS</b>	<i>The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education)</i>
<b>RM</b>	<i>Redemptoris Missio (On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate)</i>
<b>SC</b>	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)</i>
<b>SNDC</b>	<i>Summary of the National Directory for Catechetics</i>
<b>USCCB</b>	<i>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops</i>

## The Message of Catechesis

### **Jesus the Word**

The message of catechesis concerns the Word, that is, Jesus Himself.

*This is what we proclaim to you:  
what was from the beginning,  
what we have heard,  
what we have seen with our own eyes,  
what we have looked upon  
and our hands have touched—  
we speak of the Word of Life...  
what we have seen and heard  
we proclaim in turn to you  
so that you may share life with us. (1Jn 1:1-2)*

John opened his first epistle by giving us a magnificent summary of the catechetical ministry entrusted to each catechist. The message concerns the Word of Life – *Jesus Christ*. He is the pure and perfect expression of the living God. “Do you believe this?” (Cf. Jn 11:25-26). Yes, then, as St. Catherine of Siena would insist, *run toward the Truth*, because this belief must form the basis of catechesis.

In the Gospel, Christ calls the twelve chosen to be His apostles; He calls them forth in mission to teach the Truth, the Gospel. Thus, the Christian message demands more than spiritual experiences, instructional content, and dynamic worship. The Gospel message demands change within the human heart. The Gospel message demands faith-filled followers who will hand on the deposit of faith. “The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the deposit of faith has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone, that is, to the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and to the bishops in communion with him . . . .” (Cf. *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 16, 17)

### **Jesus the Teacher**

Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium (the teaching office of the Church) are so closely united with each other that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls. The Church depends on faith-filled followers to assist in the handing on of the faith. Christ calls catechists to this work. Christ responds to these willing hearts and faith-filled followers with a call to generous intimacy with Him. He is the Master Teacher. He is the one who calls them to do God’s work.

In the Gospel Jesus made it very clear to the apostle Nathanael, who is called Bartholomew, that he was always under Jesus’ caring eye. “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you” (Jn 1:45-51). Most catechists will not receive such a clear sign, but the Master Teacher calls each one to follow Him. God is at work in the lives of His followers every day, even if they may not be fully aware of His workings. Jesus often comes into the lives of his followers in unexpected ways. The Lord beckons catechists to “follow Him”. The Master calls catechists for building up the Kingdom and giving glory to the Father. This is an awesome task for anyone who aspires to this calling.

### **Imparting the Word**

Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical, *Christian Education (Divini Illius Magistri)*, that the essence of Christian education in the faith is: “. . . to cooperate with divine grace in the forming of the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ himself in those regenerated by baptism. . .” (Cf. CE 96).

All who are called to continue Christ’s work of imparting the truths of the faith must imitate the example of the Divine Teacher by trying to make instructions simple, sincere, living and real. The catechist should be enriched with the truths of the faith and have knowledge of how to impart those truths. The catechist should be vibrant with human interest and possess the skills necessary to fulfill the task of teaching.

*Authentic catechesis is always an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of Himself to humanity in Christ Jesus, revelation stored in the depths of the Church’s memory and in Sacred Scripture, and constantly communicated from one generation to the next by a living, active tradition (CT 22).*

Teaching was of paramount importance in the public life and ministry of Jesus. In fact, His parting words to His disciples were:

*Go . . . and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (Mt 28:18-20).*

Christ challenges catechists to observe *all* that He has commanded. These words cannot be emphasized too strongly today. What Christ taught and commanded is rooted in love. It is rooted in Christ Himself. The words and works of the catechist are tools the catechist uses for the building up of authentic Christian life. The catechist must provide students with a real vision of unity, goodness, beauty and the truths of the faith. God’s Word is trustworthy and true. The words and works of the catechist must reflect the Divine goodness and unshakable love of the Creator. The catechist must assist students in discovering and rediscovering the legacy of faith that has been handed down through many generations.

### **Living the Word**

St. Francis of Assisi put it aptly when he said, “preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” We have been given the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for this work. The words of the Catechism have come to us at a fortuitous time in the history of the Church. Everything we need has been handed on to us from Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterial teachings of the Church. This is what catechists must offer, and it is what students desperately need.

Truth is the same yesterday, today and forever. God alone is the fullness of truth. The fullness of this truth must be imparted with enthusiasm, faithfulness and dedication. No catechist should settle for a story that has no struggle, no hero, no salvation, no savior. Truth presents the *whole story* which includes sin, suffering, death and resurrection. *If anyone wants to be a follower of Mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow Me (Lk 9:23).*

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the catechist can impart the whole of the Gospel message. It is the Holy Spirit who is the inner companion of every catechist. The late Pope John Paul II's writings reveal and echo the exhortation of St. Paul: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Cf. CT 72).

*Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and acts on them – I will show you what he is like. He is like the man who when he built his house dug, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on rock; when the river was in flood it bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. But the one who listens and does nothing is like the man who built his house on soil, with no foundation: as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became! (Lk 6:47-49)*

### **Words and Works**

Words (the Faith) and works: these are the basic materials every catechist needs for the building of a Christian life built on rock, the Rock of Christ, and through Him, the Rock of Peter. And, through Peter, as through the Holy Father – our earthly reminder of the Father of all Holiness, the Fountainhead of all Love and Truth, we receive the authoritative teaching and the full challenge of Christ to teach the Truth. The great Dominican, St. Thomas Aquinas, tells us that teachers and catechists will be honored for their victory in teaching the faith. Teachers and catechists must become champions of the Truth. Sacred Scripture further tells us that, "the learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity" (Dan 12:3). And again, "the man who keeps them (the commandments) and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:19). What catechist would fail to desire to hand on the Truth? What catechist could fail to be humbled by such a promise? What catechist could fail to be exalted by such a prospect?

The task of catechesis is a daunting one, but it is also an important call to follow the Master Teacher, the Divine Word.

*We must therefore say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught – everything else is taught with reference to Him – and it is Christ alone who teaches – anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: My teaching is not mine, but His who sent Me (CT 6).*

The teaching of every catechist must echo the truths handed down from apostolic times. Let us then *run toward the Truth!*

May our prayer for our students and our intention in being faithful to the teachings of the faith echo the prayer Jesus entrusted to all of His followers:

*Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world,  
I have sent them into the world, and for their  
sake I consecrate myself so that they may be consecrated  
in truth. I pray not only for these, but for those also who  
through their words will believe in me. May they all be one.  
Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you . . .  
so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and  
so that I may be in them (Cf. Jn 17:17-26).*

## Rationale

We are all called to guard the *deposit of faith*. “Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view of initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life” (CT 8). Catechesis is part of the Church’s pastoral mission of handing on the faith. Catechesis is “built on a certain number of elements of the Church’s pastoral mission . . . the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching to arouse faith; examination of the reasons for belief; experience of Christian living; celebration of the sacraments; integration into the ecclesial community; and apostolic and missionary witness” (Cf. CCC, “Prologue”; CT 18).

On October 11, 1992, Pope John Paul II published his apostolic constitution “*The Deposit of Faith*”, promulgating the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

### The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) is arranged in four (4) related parts.

- **Part One**            **The Creed** (the faith professed): the Christian mystery is the object of faith
- **Part Two**            **The Sacraments** (the faith celebrated): the Christian message is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions
- **Part Three**        **Christian Morality** (the faith lived): the Christian message is present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions
- **Part Four**        **Prayer** (the faith prayed): the Christian message is the basis for our prayer, the privileged expression of which is the *Our Father*, and it represents the object of our supplication, our praise and our intercession (Cf. *Apostolic Constitution, Fidei Depositum*, on the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2).

The goal of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is to help facilitate the *lifelong conversion of the whole person* to the Father’s universal call to holiness and eternal life. “At its heart is the celebration of the Christian mysteries, especially the Eucharist and the life of prayer” (Cf. CCA xvii).

John Paul II envisioned the *Catechism* as a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechisms . . . . In June 2000, the bishops determined that a national adult catechism would be an effective way to achieve this goal. . .” Thus, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops developed the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (CCA).

## **Meaning of the Term Catechism**

Historically, the term “catechism” has acquired many meanings. The *Catechism* states that the term “comes from a Greek word that means ‘to echo’”. A teaching would be stated, and the listener “would be instructed to ‘echo’ it, or repeat it, until it was learned” (Cf. CCA, *Introduction*, xv). One should “echo” Christ’s message with mind and heart. This message should be echoed in word and deed.

The *Catechism* is “an organic and systematic expression of the Apostolic Tradition, expressed in an inspired way in Sacred Scripture and authoritatively interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church . . . . This work is intended primarily for those responsible for catechesis: first of all the bishops, as teachers of the faith and pastors of the Church . . . as an instrument in fulfilling their responsibility of teaching the People of God . . . . It will also be useful reading for all other Christian faithful” (Cf. CCC 11, 12).

## **United States Catholic Catechism for Adults**

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (CCA) will be the basic text used for catechetical training, along with other resources as outlined in this document. The *Catholic Catechism for Adults* is an invaluable tool for the catechist. The *Catholic Catechism for Adults* (CCA) is a straightforward and solidly written reference that is easy to use. It is highly recommended that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* be used along with the *Catholic Catechism for Adults*. The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* includes stories, doctrine, reflection, discussion questions, and prayer opportunities to assist the catechist in deepening his or her faith experiences. The structure of each chapter of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (CCA) is as follows:

- Story of Lesson of Faith (glimpse of Catholics who lived the faith)
- Teaching: Its Foundation and Application
- Sidebars (three questions taken from the CCC)
- Relationship of Catholic Teaching to the Culture
- Questions for Discussion  
(application of teachings to the culture and ways of internalizing the teachings)
- Doctrinal Statements (concise review of the Church’s teachings)
- Meditation and Prayer

Jesus knows each person who takes on the role of Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, Principal of a Catholic school, or catechist in a parish. He is the ever-present helper in time of need. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is precisely by the narrow, yet loving “Way” that He leads each one to paradise – to the eternal bliss for which each one longs. This “Way” is the Way of the Cross, the joy of the resurrection, and a share in the great love God has for each. It is precisely because God loves us that there is meaning in life’s journey to eternity. God calls each person to a life of holiness, a life of truth.

## **Handing on the Truth**

*The formation of catechists continues to be a high priority for most dioceses and parishes in the United States. Many dioceses directly provide a systematic program of training and formation of catechists. Others work closely with Catholic colleges, universities, and other institutes of higher education to offer programs of formation and certification for catechists and catechetical leaders. (Cf. National Directory for Catechesis, p. 9)*

All efforts in evangelization and catechesis should incorporate the following catechetical tasks:

1. *Knowledge of the faith*
  2. *Knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments*
  3. *Promote moral formation in Jesus Christ*
  4. *Teach the Christian how to pray with Christ*
  5. *Prepare the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church*
  6. *Promote a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society*
- (Cf. NDC, Chapter 2, “Tasks of Catechists”, 20)

Every catechist has the task of “handing on” the truths of the faith. In order to give to others, one must first be prepared. Catechetical formation is formation in Christ – a formation that is grounded in the Truth. Therefore, effective catechesis is inculturated catechesis. That is, catechetical teaching must maintain the truths of the faith and attempt to discover the “seeds of the Gospel” that may be in present day culture.

*The evangelization of culture through the communication of the complete and authentic Gospel message, and the inculturation of that message through a profound dialogue between it and the language, customs, and practices of a people, constitute what Pope Paul VI termed the ‘drama of our time’. (Cf. NDC 21; EN 20)*

## Catechist Formation In The Truth

### **Bishops, Priests and Deacons**

The catechist should know that the Bishops are “beyond all others the ones primarily responsible for catechesis, the catechists par excellence” (Cf. CT 63). As chief catechist in the diocese, the bishop is responsible for the total catechetical mission of the local churches. Catechesis is one of the fundamental tasks of the bishop’s ministry. First of all, the bishop is a catechist himself; he is a “herald of the faith” (LG 25).

*In addition to devoting himself personally to the proclamation of the Gospel and the ministry of catechesis, the bishop is also to supervise the catechetical mission in the diocese . . . He is to make certain that the texts and other instruments used in catechesis transmit the Catholic faith completely and authentically. He is to ensure ‘that catechists are adequately prepared for their task, being well-instructed in the doctrine of the Church and possessing both practical and theoretical knowledge of the laws of psychology and of educational method’. He is also to adopt a catechetical plan that is integrated into the overall diocesan pastoral plan and coordinated with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [Cf. NDC 54; CD 14].*

Bishops hold the chief role as teacher of the faithful. Bishops are charged “to bring about and maintain... a real passion for catechesis of the faithful under their charge . . .” (Cf. CT 63, 67). Bishops entrust their pastors with the ministry of sharing in the teaching mission of the Church. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders priests share in the universal dimensions of the mission that Christ entrusted to His apostles. Priests are “consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament” (Cf. CCC 1564). The Vatican Council has called priests “instructors in the faith” (PO 6). “At another level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry’ ” (CD 15, LG 29). Deacons assist the Bishop and pastor in proclaiming the Gospel and dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity within the Church.

## **The Pastor, Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, or Principal of a Catholic School**

The Pastor, Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, and/or Principal of a Catholic school assist the Bishop in the important role of imparting the truths of the faith by the recruitment of catechists who are faithful to the teachings of the Church and who are committed to growing in their own knowledge of the faith. This is a serious task. The leaders in these roles must be watchful and zealous of the quality of religious programs that are offered for the faithful in their parishes and schools. Currently, the diocese will assist Catechetical Leaders and Principals in this task through the *Catechetical Formation Program* offered in collaboration with Aquinas College in Nashville, Tennessee. Just like the apostles, catechists need continued information, formation, and encouragement for this mission. The Church stresses the importance of nurturing the vocation and spirituality of the catechist; therefore, this program has been developed.

The local leadership and management of the formation of each catechist is the responsibility of the Pastor, Director of Religious Education (DRE), Catechetical Leader and/or Principal of the Catholic school. It is the responsibility of the Catechetical Leader to initiate the process. The Catechetical Leader is strongly encouraged to do the following:

1. Convey to catechists the importance of catechetical formation and ongoing formation in the faith
2. Provide guidance to catechists regarding their catechetical formation needs: classes, workshops, and events
3. Assist catechists in keeping accurate records of formation course work, learning hours, and formation needs (forms provided in this binder)
4. Forward proper documentation for catechist certification to the diocesan Office of Religious Education

Every parish and school catechist is strongly encouraged to meet certification standards within a three (3) year period. Every catechist is also encouraged to deepen his or her understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church through *ongoing catechetical formation* opportunities. Parish catechists and Catholic school teachers need to be theologically prepared, skilled in methodology, and firmly committed to living the faith they profess. Hence, catechists are entitled to the opportunity to engage in careful and thorough preparation for their teaching ministry.

### **Additionally, catechists should satisfy the following pre-requisites:**

- **Be fully initiated Catholics who attend Mass each Sunday**
- **Faithfully participate in the sacramental and prayer life of the Church**
- **\*Lead a life that is morally and doctrinally consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church, and reflect the happiness of following Jesus Christ**
- **Accept and hold as true everything the Holy Catholic Church teaches, believes and proclaims to be revealed by God**
- **Have attended *Virtus* (Safe Environment) training**

**\* If married, the catechist should be in a valid marriage sanctioned by the Catholic Church. If single, the catechist should lead a life consonant with the single state, e.g. no cohabitation. If divorced and remarried, the catechist should have previously received a decree of nullity (annulment).**

## The Catechist

Formation in the truths of the faith is important if Catechetical Leaders are to recruit catechists and aid in their preparation for handing on the faith. The *Catechetical Formation Program* attempts to provide catechists with initial training which can help alleviate the fear of inadequacy. The program will assist the Catechetical Leader in providing the catechist with support and encouragement to present the faith that has been handed down from generation to generation through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Catechists and religion teachers in Catholic schools will find it helpful to reflect on spirituality, ministry, and the task of teaching the faith. Catechists will also benefit from learning techniques and skills that are specific and unique to catechesis.

### The Process and Basic Components

The *Diocese of Knoxville Catechetical Formation Program* offers each catechist the opportunity to earn catechetical certification and continue to deepen his or her formation in the faith. The formation of catechists can be accomplished through the process described in this document. The process is comprised of important essential elements if the handing on of the faith is to be accomplished:

- **Catechist Level 1: Foundational Courses** - These courses serve as a foundation in the content, practice, and teaching of the Catholic Faith. Areas of formation are arranged according to the pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Also included in Level 1 is a *Catechist Orientation* workshop. This workshop serves as an introduction to catechesis, spirituality of the catechist, ecclesial methodology, creating a positive teaching-learning environment, lesson planning (scope and sequence), introduction to catechist portfolio (binder) components, and program requirements.
- **Catechist Level 2: Aquinas College Catechetical Courses** – These courses build upon and develop the courses offered in Level 1. All courses are taught by Dominican faculty of Aquinas College. Sacred Art is also incorporated throughout the program of studies.

*Art is meant to bring the divine to the human world to the level of the senses, then, from the spiritual insight gained from the senses and the stirring of the emotions, to raise the human world to God, to His inexpressible kingdom of mystery, beauty and life (Pope Paul VI, Address to the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Art in Italy, 1969).*

Sacred art “should be worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of things supernatural” (Cf. NDC 37B, SC 122).

- **Deepening Spirituality: Ongoing Formation for Certified Catechists** – The aim of this component is to encourage and enhance the ongoing faith development of a certified catechist.
- **Home Study Reflection:** Personal reflection on content of the session attended. Typed or written “reflections” become part of the catechetical portfolio. Length of the “reflection” should not exceed two pages.
- **Catechetical Portfolio:** The portfolio is used as part of the process of evaluation for the catechist. It is completed over the duration of the program and submitted to the Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, or Principal of the Catholic school when all requirements for certification have been met. Approval for catechist certification is requested from the Diocese of Knoxville by the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, or Catechetical Leader.
- **Catechetical Certification:** Certification is awarded by the Bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville through the Office of Religious Education.

In many schools and parishes, these elements may already exist. This program will simply formalize what is currently taking place. Elsewhere, some areas of content may not be strong enough or may not exist, and will need to be added or implemented entirely.

It is the desire of the bishop of the diocese, as the primary teacher of the faith, to encourage all pastors of parishes and school Catechetical Leaders to implement these components in their current program.

The vitality of future generations depends on an emphasis on teaching the authentic truths of the faith. Pope John Paul II stated that, “the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes* – “to the nations,” or to everyone in the world (Cf. AG 1-5).

*The new evangelization is aimed at personal transformation through the development of a personal relationship with God, participation in sacramental worship, the development of a mature ethical and social conscience, ongoing catechesis, and a deepening integration of faith into all areas of life (Cf. NDC 17a, EA 66-70, CL 14).*

## **Record Keeping**

Each catechist is responsible for keeping a record of his/her progress throughout the formation process. The use of a portfolio format is a systematic manner that will assist in this endeavor. It is very simple: the catechist will simply use a notebook format for collecting all papers, certificates, etc., and placing them in a specific place. Certificates for attendance at each session will note the topic and learning hour(s) earned. The *Catechetical Formation Program* will award certificates at the end of each session. The certificates become part of the “Portfolio Notebook”. It is the responsibility of the catechist to follow through on this process as he/she shows proof of participation in catechetical formation opportunities.

Under the *Deepening Spirituality* component, courses scheduled through the diocesan Office of Religious Education are automatically approved for certification hours. If a catechist chooses to attend other sessions, prior approval must be obtained from the Pastor, parish Director of Religious Education (DRE), Catechetical Leader, or School Principal before hours will be awarded.

In order to receive proper credit for attendance at programs, *the catechist* must verify participation by including one of the following documents in the portfolio:

- A copy of the agenda listing speakers/topics approved
- A copy of the registration form, or
- Copies of pertinent materials noting involvement in the program

Use of any of the above-mentioned materials should *be initialed by the Catechetical Leader* for purposes of verification of approved attendance.

It is the responsibility of the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, or Principal of the Catholic school to periodically question the catechist’s progress leading to catechetical certification. The completed portfolio should be submitted to the Catechetical Leader as evidence of program completion.

## Orientation and Process For Catechetical Formation

### STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- Step One:** The catechist begins the formation process by attending the Foundational Courses in Catechist Level 1. The *Catechist Orientation* is for all NEW catechists – veteran catechists are also welcome to attend the session. The program continues with Catechist Level 2, which includes Fall and Spring sessions over a period of three (3) years. Each catechist is responsible for documentation of classes attended. Forms for documentation are included in this binder.
- Step Two:** The catechist completes the 14 instructional hours in Catechist Level 1 and 36 instructional hours in Catechist Level 2 and presents completed portfolio (10 hours). Total number of hours for certification is 60.
- Step Three:** The catechist applies for catechetical certification through the local Catechetical Leader. Certification is granted through the Office of Religious Education by the Bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville.
- Step Four:** The catechist participates in ongoing catechetical formation (*Deepening Spirituality*) opportunities after the certification process has been completed and applies for renewal seals when applicable.

At this level of spiritual development, the catechist may wish to participate in furthering his/her knowledge through formal courses, and/or auditing classes in catechetics, theology, and/or philosophy at Aquinas College, or another Catholic institution. The catechist may also participate in distance learning coursework through Catholic universities. The diocesan Office of Religious Education can provide information about particular distance learning programs.

## The Call: Apostles of Truth and Love

*Jesus sent out the Twelve after instructing them . . . (Cf. Mt 10:7)*

St. Mark tells us in his Gospel of Jesus' public ministry, that Jesus went up to the mountain and called His apostles to follow Him. God had come into our midst in the Person of Christ, so that we might find our place in the midst of God.

Jesus called those whom He wanted to call, and St. Mark tells us they came to Him. The call respects one's freedom to choose. The response also demands one's freedom to respond. It is up to each person, when he/she hears the call, to come in response. This response is made with a heart filled with love for God and others.

Ordinarily, those called by a desire to give to others the truths about Jesus are fired with apostolic love, a love which expresses itself through bringing the Good News of salvation to others. Each brings peace and joy in Christ through hope, the teaching of truth, and the powerful witness of Christian example.

In the Gospel accounts, one finds many vocation stories. The Lord calls the twelve chosen to be His apostles; He calls the seventy-two disciples and sends them forth in mission. Some of those He cures are called to follow Him; others are sent back to give witness among their own people. Jesus responds to generosity and faith with a call to greater intimacy.

True zeal for souls is not always measured by evident success. One would have little or no success if it were limited to words; to make zeal effective, the example of the catechist must reinforce his or her teaching. Zeal is perfected when one practices what he or she teaches. The love of God and neighbor is the reservoir of genuine zeal for souls. "He does much," says the *Imitation of Christ*, "who loves much" (*Imitation of Christ*, 15:2).

St. John Mary Vianney, the Curé of Ars, made the confessional his apostolate; St. John Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, taught abandoned and young children how to love God; St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, led people to God by his teaching and preaching of the truth in love. Every person who aspires to become a catechist to hand on the teachings of the faith must share in this universal Catholic spirit of apostolicity which is called "zeal for souls". The mission of every adult who answers the call of catechist is to instruct others in the truth; the Truth who is a Person, Jesus Christ Himself. This "missionary activity" in the classroom is the very essence of the calling and response as a teacher of the faith.

Persons answering God's call are essentially very generous people. *Generosity* is the willingness to sacrifice oneself for others; it is a social virtue *extraordinaire*, because it desires only the good of others.

The generous person who accepts the “call” to become a catechist is magnanimous in his or her willingness to serve in the teaching ministry of the Church. It is one who has glimpsed what God has done for him/her and desires to act with like generosity toward others. What a blessing that person is to the Church!

One who aspires to become a catechist is eager to give what he/she freely received. St. Paul states in his epistle to the people of Corinth,

*I made myself all things to all men in order to save  
some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of  
the Gospel, to have a share in its blessings.  
(1 Cor 9:22-23)*

Each person called to ministry within the Church is challenged to become wise and knowledgeable in the truths of the faith. Of wisdom, the Old Testament says:

*And so I prayed, and understanding was given to me;  
I entreated, and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me . . .  
What I learned without self-interest, I pass on without  
reserve; I do not intend to hide her riches. For she is  
an inexhaustible treasure to men, and those who acquire  
it wins God’s friendship, commended as they are to Him by  
the benefits of her teaching. May God grant me to speak  
as he would wish and express thoughts worthy of his gifts,  
since he himself is the guide of Wisdom . . . We are indeed  
in his hand, we ourselves and our words, with all our  
understanding, too, and technical knowledge (Cf. Wisdom 7:7-18).*

The effects of wisdom are of vital, far-reaching, and practical consequence in assuming the mission of catechist. Knowledge of the teachings of the faith provides a necessary climate for wisdom. Wisdom dictates the necessity of each person’s need to be completely trained in the truths of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. “What I am commending to you is sound doctrine: do not discard my teaching” (Proverbs 2:3).

It is the task of each person called, to communicate the truths learned. What helps to make a good catechist is the ability to put a proper value on the teachings of the *Catechism* and to place them at the service of the developing student. Without this necessary competence in his/her knowledge of truth, that is God Himself, the catechist violates the first principle of wisdom.

Strictly speaking, wisdom is not something one can “earn”. Wisdom is a gift of God that comes to the person with his/her faith — all wisdom comes from the Lord and with him it remains forever (Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:1).

Therefore, Christ’s call is all-embracing. Each person is called to love with an all-embracing charity; a charity that is rooted in the Truth, the Person of Jesus Christ.

As one can see, God's Word inspires and compels action. When one cooperates with the action of the Holy Spirit and answers His call to use his/her gifts for the good of others, the gift of freedom is exercised. This freedom lies in the power to love, and to become like Him who is Love. The more one gives of one's self, the more he/she enjoys the beatitude promised to the poor in spirit.

Having been baptized into Christ, one can truly be Christ for others. One can bring Christ's saving Word and meaning to the experiences of everyday life. The Lord has His way of using one's words and actions to bear His message of love. This call to preach the *Truth in Love* is the fundamental call of each person aspiring to become an effective catechist.

Mindful of the need for assistance in learning the truths of the faith as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, this program has been developed to support those who wish to receive catechist certification in the Diocese of Knoxville. This need is best accomplished when each person is directly involved in this instructive endeavor.

The following components were addressed in the development of the total program:

- Needs in content and methodology for imparting the faith
- Time constraints and obligations
- Provisions for settings that may be conducive to learning and encourage interaction among participants
- Some flexibility within the process to allow catechists to pursue catechetical areas of interest
- Opportunities for prayer, sacraments, and camaraderie
- Time to reflect, assimilate, and integrate concepts learned
- Opportunities for "Home Study Reflection", assimilation, and integration of concepts learned
- Time for personal evaluation of one's own knowledge base of the truths of the faith
- Time to keep one's instructional record updated through the use of a portfolio format

Research shows that adult learners tend to be persons who are:

- Self-directed in their pursuit of goals
- Creative in using their experiences as a resource in their learning efforts
- Rich in life experiences and tend to link these experiences with learning and teaching
- Highly motivated when learning material is tied to professional, spiritual, or personal skills
- Eager to learn information that is immediately applicable to their situation and task
- Aware of their own study needs
- Social with other adults — who learn, share, and help each other solve problems
- Reflective thinkers

The adult learner knows that he or she must learn to manage time, family relationships, life, and the many responsibilities that life brings. As an adult learner, one can avoid too much stress by working with others and networking with persons for support. This process will help avoid too much anxiety and lead one to peace and joy in his/her mission of passing on the faith. As an adult learner aspiring to become a certified catechist, one should always remember the power of the Holy Spirit in assisting in the burdens and responsibilities of life and work.

Following Our Lord is a wondrous joy. God made each person for happiness, for friendship, for fulfillment. It is difficult to grasp such goodness, such love, such generosity. But that is our God!

## Ecclesial Methodology

“God’s word has mighty power; it effects the purpose for which it is intended. More than a message, it is an event that inspires, even compels, action. Christ’s missionary command was just such an event. It impelled the apostles to carry God’s word to the ends of the earth. God infused humanity with the grace of his Holy Spirit in order to bring forth the divine fruit of conversion to Christ and confession of faith – so powerful is the word of God in accomplishing his will” (NDC 27).

*The transmission of the Gospel message continues to be a work of the Trinity. By God’s grace, some people are called to proclaim the Gospel as catechists. Whatever human methods these catechists employ must be based on the model of God’s own methodology – the father’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Summary of the National Directory for Catechesis, p.15)*

Methodology always takes into account not only how material is organized, but also the age, ability, language and culture of the learner – those being catechized. Catechetical or ecclesial methodology derives from the pedagogy of God. God it is who leads persons in their capacity to accept and interpret who Jesus is and what Divine Revelation has revealed to mankind. Ultimately, ecclesial methodology should lead to the salvation of the human person. This is a gradual process that is realized through the words and deeds of the catechist along with God’s action in the human person. The work of the catechist is to “sow the seed” – to communicate God’s loving plan of salvation in the Person of Jesus Christ. Genuine catechesis should do the following:

- *Emphasize God’s loving initiative and the person’s free response*
- *Accept the progressive nature of Revelation, the transcendent and mysterious nature of the Word of God, and the Word’s adaptation to different persons and cultures*
- *Recognize the centrality of Jesus Christ*
- *Value the community experience of faith*
- *Be rooted in interpersonal relations and employ the process of dialogue*
- *Utilize signs that link words and deeds, teaching and experience, and especially visible signs that express and make present the invisible reality of God’s presence*
- *Draws from the Holy Spirit its power of truth and a commitment to bear witness to the Truth (Cf. Summary of the National Directory of Catechetics, Chapter 4:“Divine and Human Methodology,” p.17).*

Therefore, one can say that the communication of faith is an “event of grace” through the work of the Holy Spirit and an “encounter of the Word of God with the experience of the person” (Cf. NDC 28)

## **Inductive and Deductive Methodology**

There are many methods that can be used to hand on the faith. Catechetical methods may consist of one or two basic approaches: *inductive* and *deductive* methodology (NDC 29).

The **inductive method** begins with the experience(s) of the learners and leads to knowledge of a divine truth.

The **deductive method** begins with the truth of the faith that is applied to the concrete experience(s) of the learners.

Both are good approaches when properly used by the catechist. “The variety in the methods used is a sign of life and a resource” (CT 51). Also, the age and intellectual development of the learner “their degree of ecclesial and spiritual maturity and many other personal circumstances” (CT 51) must be carefully studied in preparation for handing on the truths of the faith. In fact, “perfect fidelity to Catholic doctrine is compatible with a rich diversity of preparation” (GDC 122). The catechist must remember that the communication of the teachings of the faith is first and foremost, an “*event of grace*” through the power and workings of the Holy Spirit (Cf. NDC 29).

## **Fundamental Task of Catechesis**

The fundamental task of catechesis is to form disciples of Jesus Christ and prepare them for their mission in the world. “Jesus instructed his disciples; He prayed with them; He showed them how to live; and He gave them His mission” (NDC 20). Jesus’ example is the best example for effective catechesis today. Following His example as Master Teacher, catechesis encompasses six (6) “fundamental tasks, each of which is related to an aspect of faith in Christ” and described in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Cf. GDC 20):

1. *Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.*
  2. *Catechesis promotes meaningful participation in liturgical worship and the sacramental life of the Church.*
  3. *Catechesis integrates moral formation into a Christian way of life.*
  4. *Catechesis teaches Christians how to pray with Christ, in Christ, and in communion with the Church.*
  5. *Catechesis initiates the Christian into the life of the local church community and fosters active participation in the mission of the Church.*
  6. *Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares Christians to witness to Christ in society.*
- ... All these tasks are necessary in order to attain the full development of the Christian faith (Cf. NDC 20; CT 53).

It is obvious from the foregoing comments that the catechist is a key and vital component of effective evangelization today. Catechists must be “*men and women endowed with many gifts, both natural and supernatural, who are capable of giving witness to these gifts*” (RDECS 96).

## Catechist Certification

Today, catechists should possess a strong missionary spirit. The Church calls catechists to give special attention to the missionary dimension in both training and activity. Programs that prepare catechists for their important task must not be vague, but specific to the needs of the Church today. Catechists today face many challenges: growing secularization, indifference to religion, political changes, mass media, growing numbers of immigrants, special needs children, etc. Like every Christian, catechists are “called to holiness and to mission” (RM 90).

*Like Jesus, the only Master (Cf. Mt 23:8), catechists serve their brothers and sisters by their teaching (Cf. Acts 1:1), which are manifestations of love. To do the will of their Father, which as an act of salvific love for others, is their food, as it was that of Jesus (Cf. Jn 4:34; Cf. GC 20).*

Catechists, like the good shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep “until he finds it” (Lk 15:4), should be persons possessing apostolic zeal and a real missionary spirit. One’s burning zeal and desire to teach should be likened to that of St. Paul who says: “I have made myself all things to all in order to save some at any cost. I do all for the sake of the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:22-23; Cf. 2 Cor 12:15). And again St. Paul says: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16).

Catechist certification has been simplified to meet present day needs and to echo the message of truth and love given to us by Jesus Himself. There is only one level of certification; however, special recognition is given to those catechists who hold degrees in Catholic theology. Once a person has been certified and recognized by the diocese as having met certification requirements, there is a minimum of six (6) learning hours per year that are required. These hours of ongoing formation provide opportunities for the “Deepening Spirituality” component and renewal seals.

The process for formation of catechists in the diocese will follow *the Diocese of Knoxville Catechetical Formation Program* requirements. The requirements for certification and ongoing formation are outlined in this document.

### **Learning Hours and Catechist Certification**

Learning hours are not a precise measure but *provide catechists with an indication of the amount of study and degree of commitment expected*. Learning time includes instructional time (lectures, sessions, seminars, workshops, catechetical work etc.), as well as time spent preparing home study reflections and compiling the portfolio. There is an expectation that the catechist will be able to demonstrate that the amount of study associated with the program is sufficient to ensure achievement of appropriate learning outcomes and standards and be qualified for catechist certification.

## **Learning Hours and Transfer Qualifications**

Any current catechist who has met diocesan certification requirements as of August 2008, and has been awarded certification will retain their status as a “certified catechist”. The catechist will be “grandfathered” and is strongly encouraged to begin the “*Deepening Spirituality*” component of ongoing faith formation.

A catechist who has been certified in another program should submit a written request to the former parish/school for a copy of his/her certification record. Upon receipt and review of the record submitted, the diocesan Office of Religious Education will determine the status of the catechist in meeting the necessary criteria for certification. Additionally, each catechist should meet with his/her Catechetical Leader in order to assess readiness and preparation for the specific teaching assignment. This procedure will help ensure that the catechist possesses sufficient preparation to hand on the teachings of the Catholic Church to those being catechized.

Those catechists who have completed a degree in Catholic theology, religious education, pastoral studies or related field may qualify for diocesan certification. After a review of transcripts, a catechist may be awarded a *Professional Certificate* for a Bachelors degree or a *Master Certificate* for a Masters degree. Catechists who have completed a non-degree certificate program through a college or university may also qualify for a *Professional Certificate*.

There is such a great need for generous men and women to devote themselves to handing on the truths of the Gospel. By way of conclusion, the words of Pope John Paul II echo the great need for catechists to be formed in the truth and express that truth in love.

*So many times it has fallen to you to strengthen and build up the young Christian communities . . . through the proclamation of the Gospel . . . it was you, the catechists, who instructed . . . prepared people for the sacraments, taught the faith and were leaders of the Christian community . . . Give thanks to the Lord for the gift of your vocation, through which Christ has called you from among other men and women to be instruments of his salvation. Respond with generosity to your vocation and your names will be written in heaven (Cf. Lk 10:20; Cf. GC, “The Conclusion”. Address to the Plenary Assembly for the Evangelization of Peoples, Angola, June 7, 1992).*