



**DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE**  
**Office of Religious Education**

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*In collaboration with*



## **Catechetical Formation Program**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***What is a catechist?***

Through word and example, catechists teach the Catholic faith and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Catechists are those who are called to serve through teaching, witness, prayer, service and building community. Catechists minister to adults, youth and children in a variety of locations and programs: parish faith formation and religious education programs, youth ministry programs, sacramental preparation, RCIA, family programs, Scripture study, and more.

#### ***What is a certified catechist?***

A certified catechist is one who has completed the requirements to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to pass on the Catholic faith to others in the name of the Church. A certified catechist has been adequately formed in the areas of ecclesial methodology, spirituality, and Catholic doctrine according to a program that has been approved or established by the diocesan bishop through the Office of Religious Education.

#### ***Why should I become certified?***

The Catechetical Formation Program is a way for catechists to grow in their own faith, to develop confidence in their role as a catechist and to achieve certification. Becoming certified indicates that a level of knowledge, education, formation, and skills have been attained according to set standards and competencies.

#### ***How does one become a certified catechist?***

Within the Diocese of Knoxville, a catechist becomes certified through a set program of study developed by the Office of Religious Education in collaboration with Aquinas College in Nashville, TN. This program includes a three-year curriculum of study which culminates in a catechist being awarded diocesan certification. The program is divided into two levels: Catechist Level 1 and Catechist Level 2. Each level serves as a benchmark toward certification.

**Catechist Level 1** serves as a foundation in the content, practice, and teaching of the Catholic Faith. These courses follow the pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and include: *What We Believe*, *Sacraments*, *Personal Morality*, and *Spirituality & Faith*. A workshop on catechetical ministry, titled *Catechist Orientation*, is also a requirement of Level 1.

**Catechist Level 2** builds upon and develops the courses offered in Level 1. As with Level 1, these courses follow the pillars of the *Catechism* and include catechetical methods. Level 2

courses are taught by Dominican faculty of Aquinas College. After the completion of Levels 1 and 2, a catechist is awarded certification by the Office of Religious Education.

***How do I begin the process of becoming a certified catechist?***

Begin by taking the scheduled courses offered in Catechist Level 1. You may view the latest schedule and register for each course on the diocesan website ([www.dioceseofknoxville.org](http://www.dioceseofknoxville.org)). A catechist should complete these five courses within a two-year time period. Catechists may elect to attend the Level 1 courses before beginning Catechist Level 2 or he/she may choose to take the Level 1 courses simultaneously with the courses offered in Level 2. In this case, catechists would complete all certification requirements within a three-year period. Each course or session in Levels 1 and 2 will be credited only once.

***I missed Year 1 of the Aquinas College Catechetical Courses. Do I need to wait until Year 1 is offered again before I begin the certification process?***

No. Participants may begin the certification process at any time. The sessions do not need to be taken in sequence.

***How many hours are required for catechist certification?***

A total of sixty hours of formation are required to achieve diocesan certification. The hours are broken down as follows:

Catechist Level 1: 14 hours

Catechist Level 2: 46 hours

Once a catechist is certified, he or she must complete an additional six hours of formation per year to renew certification.

***When and where are courses scheduled?***

Catechist Level 1 courses are scheduled during the week, usually on Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm until 9:00pm, throughout the diocese. Both the *Catechist Orientation* and Level 2 courses occur on Saturdays during the fall and spring. To view the latest schedule and register for classes, visit the Diocese of Knoxville website ([www.dioceseofknoxville.org](http://www.dioceseofknoxville.org)).

***What if I'm not interested in becoming a catechist, may I still attend the courses?***

Yes. The courses offered in each level are open to all adults within the Diocese of Knoxville.

***I took the Adult Faith Formation classes offered by the diocese and was awarded a Provisional Certificate. What do I do next?***

You have completed Catechist Level 1 (except for the *Catechist Orientation* workshop) and are ready to begin Level 2, the Aquinas College Catechetical Courses. You may register for the *Catechist Orientation* session and each Level 2 course on the diocesan website ([www.dioceseofknoxville.org](http://www.dioceseofknoxville.org)).

***I am already a certified catechist within the Diocese of Knoxville. Do I need to begin the new program and become re-certified?***

No. Catechists who are currently certified at the Catechist, Advanced or Professional levels will be “grandfathered” into the new program. In other words, those who are already certified under a previous Diocese of Knoxville program will retain their “certified” status. Each certified catechist, however, needs to renew his/her certification by completing a minimum of six hours of formation per year. A certified catechist may do this in a variety of ways: attending courses listed in Catechist Levels 1 and/or 2 (each class may be credited only once, however). A certified catechist may also choose to attend regional or national conferences, Diocesan Day, parish/school-based workshops, diocesan-sponsored classes, online seminars or courses for renewal hours. 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 parish director of religious education (DRE) before hours will be awarded.

***After I become certified, how do I renew my certificate?***

Certification is granted for a period of three years. A certificate is renewed upon the completion of eighteen additional hours of formation (6 hours per year x 3 years = 18 hours). Hours may be taken from courses in Catechist Level 1 and 2, but each course will be credited only once. Additional opportunities for hours include: regional or national conferences, Diocesan Day, parish/school-based workshops, diocesan-sponsored classes, online seminars or courses for renewal hours. 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 parish director of religious education (DRE) before hours will be awarded.

***I have a degree in Catholic theology. Do I still need to complete the Diocese of Knoxville certification program?***

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*.

***I have certification from another diocese. Do I still need to complete the Diocese of Knoxville certification program?***

A copy of your previous diocesan coursework and program requirements should be submitted to the Office of Religious Education for review. After a review of all documentation, the catechist will be notified as to his/her certification status within the Diocese of Knoxville.

***I have taken several of the Adult Faith Formation classes, but I haven't taken any of the classes that are now being required for Catechist Level 1; i.e. "What We Believe," "Sacraments," etc. Should I take the courses that are part of the current requirements?***

Any of the twelve previously offered Adult Faith Formation courses will count toward fulfilling the requirements listed in Catechist Level 1 except for the *Catechist Orientation* workshop. For

example, if you did not attend the *Personal Morality* class, but did attend the class on *Social Justice*, you may substitute it for the *Personal Morality* class.

***Under the previous certification requirements, a catechist could substitute “Echoes of Faith” videos for several of the Adult Faith Formation Courses listed in Catechist Level 1. Is this still a possibility?***

Under the new requirements beginning in the fall of 2008, catechists will no longer be able to substitute the Level 1 courses with the *Echoes of Faith* videos or any other materials. In order to complete the Level 1 requirements, catechists will need to attend the Level 1 courses.

***I would like more information about the Catechetical Formation Program, whom should I contact?***

You may check the Religious Education webpage on the diocesan website ([www.dioceseofknoxville.org](http://www.dioceseofknoxville.org)) for the latest information. You may also contact the Office of Religious Education at 865-584-3307.