



Secretariat for  
Catechetical Formation

Catholic Diocese  
of Cleveland

# PARISH CATECHIST CERTIFICATION PROCESS

September 2023



# Introduction

In 2020, the Directory for Catechesis was given by the Vatican to the worldwide Church to guide catechetical ministries, as well as those who lead and take part in them. The Directory addresses the mission, person and formation of the catechist and boldly calls for a formation process that focuses on the importance of the person of the catechist and supports their mission of forming missionary disciples.

It names three dimensions of formation that are essential areas in which catechists should be formed and continue to grow. These areas are listed below and guided the Office of Catechetical Formation in the development of this revised Parish Catechist Certification Process.

## **1: Being and Knowing-How to Be With**

Being and knowing-how to be with is connected to the catechist's identity as a witness of the faith and a keeper of the memory of God. This formation nourishes the spirituality of the catechist, deepening the credibility of his/her own witness of Christian living.

Knowing how to be with others is essential to the ministry of accompaniment: the art of cultivating interpersonal relationships based on respect, trust, and love. Forming catechists as relational witnesses requires human formation as well as formation within the life of the community.

## **2: Knowledge**

This dimension considers the role of catechist as a teacher and guide, recognizing that forming others in faith is not transmitting human knowledge, but communicating God's revelation in its entirety. This formation encourages the exploration and study of the message to be proclaimed in relation to the various contexts and life experiences of the hearer, attending also to the need for communication skills.

## **3: Savoir-faire: Pedagogical and Methodological Formation**

The savoir-faire dimension of catechist formation deals with teaching skills and methodology, and the role of the catechist as an accompanier and educator, serving together with the community and in its name. This includes competence in the communication and narration of the faith, capacity to guide group dynamics that foster learning, and the ability to use various techniques and resources with creativity.

# PARISH CATECHIST CERTIFICATES



## Level I: Parish Catechist

It is our hope that all parish catechists continue growing in their faith and in their catechetical ministry by participating in the course offerings required for this level of certification. These opportunities have been chosen and developed to encourage the formation of catechists according to the guidance of the Directory for Catechesis, and we are confident all catechists, new as well as seasoned, will benefit from engaging in them.



## Level II: Master Parish Catechist

While the first level of certification addresses well the three areas of formation promoted in the Directory for Catechesis, as lifelong learners on a faith-filled journey together, the chance to immerse ourselves even more deeply in our faith is always calling to us. This second level of certification invites catechists to embrace and gain both greater knowledge and understanding in a variety of areas of Catholic teaching. Courses at this level may be taken toward the renewal of Parish Catechist Certificates without any obligation to acquire the Master Parish Catechist Certificate.

## Retreat Requirement

Retreats offer us extended, dedicated time with God, which is valuable for our spiritual growth. This requirement may be fulfilled in a variety of ways and is meant to help catechists grow on their own journey of faith. Whether a day of recollection offered by a parish or a longer retreat experience offered by a Catholic retreat center, renewing our spirits is grace-filled.

## Safe Environment Requirements

All catechists are required to follow the processes put into place by the Diocese of Cleveland in compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, to ensure the safety of all youth. This includes background checks, abuse prevention training through the VIRTUS Protecting God's Children program, and signed acknowledgments for the diocesan Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse (Revised 2016) and Standards of Conduct for Ministry (Revised 2016).





## Transitioning Previous Courses to This Process – “Grandparenting”

All work completed toward former catechist certificates will be honored and applied toward the Parish Catechist or Master Parish Catechist Certificate, including work which is not required in this process. Individual circumstances will be reviewed by the staff of the Office of Catechetical Formation in order to fully apply past work toward certification into this process.

## Degreed Individuals

Persons holding academic degrees from Catholic colleges or universities in theology, religious studies, religious education, spirituality, or a related field should contact the Office of Catechetical Formation in order to have their transcripts evaluated toward certification.



## Where Certificate Courses are Located



**The Digital Academy** is an online platform developed and shared by the Office of Catechetical Formation and the Office of Catholic Education that provides a variety of services, one of which is to offer courses for ongoing education and formation for parish catechists and Catholic school teachers. Parish Catechetical Leaders should contact Dolores Bruno at [dbruno@dioceseofcleveland.org](mailto:dbruno@dioceseofcleveland.org) to set up accounts in the Digital Academy for their catechists.

**The VLCFF (Virtual Community for Faith Formation)** is an online option for adult faith formation developed by the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives which is housed at the University of Dayton. The Diocese of Cleveland has been a partner diocese with the VLCFF, allowing the cost of courses to be substantially reduced and comparable to the cost of courses in our Digital Academy. Visit their homepage at <https://vlcff.udayton.edu>.

**The CAMINO** is an online option for adult faith formation in Spanish developed by the McGrath Institute for Church Life which is housed at the University of Notre Dame. Visit their homepage at <https://mcgrath.nd.edu/online-courses/camino>.

Parishes wishing to offer local, in-person courses toward certification should contact the Office of Catechetical Formation to discuss options and collaborate in planning.

“Formation sets as its goal, in the first place, making catechists aware that as baptized persons they are true missionary disciples, meaning active participants in evangelization, and on this basis are enabled by the Church to communicate the Gospel and to accompany and educate believers in the faith.” (Directory for Catechesis, 132)

The Office of Catechetical Formation provides opportunities for ongoing education and formation of parish catechists, in order to assist and support the parish community's efforts in the formation of catechists, so that they may be better-informed, healthy and whole. One of the ways the OCF promotes the ongoing development of catechists in their ministry is through the Diocesan Certification Process for Parish Catechists.

## Level I: Parish Catechist

### A Witness of Faith & Keeper of the Memory of God (Being and Knowing-how-to-be-with)

**Strand 2 – Worship** (3 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Strand 2 | Liturgia y Celebración** (3 sesiones, Español, in-person or live virtual)  
or **Sacramentos y Liturgia** (5 semanas, CAMINO, Español)

and 1 of the following

**What is Prayer?** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**La Oración: ¿Qué es?** (5 sesiones, Español, in-person or live virtual)  
or

**Introduction to Prayer** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Introducción a la Oración** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

and

**The Vocation and Ministry of the Catechist** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Vocation, Spirituality and Discipleship of Catechists** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Vocación y Espiritualidad del Líder Cristiano** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)





## **A Teacher and Mystagogue (Knowledge)**

**Catholic Morality/Christian Living** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Moralidad Cristiana | Vida Cristiana** (5 sesiones, Español, in-person or live virtual)

or

**Introduction to Christian Morality** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Moral Cristiana** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)


and 1 of the following

**Introduction to Catholic Christianity: Basic Beliefs** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Survey of Catholic Doctrine** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Fundamentos en la Fe** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

**Introducción a la Doctrina Católica** (5 semanas, CAMINO, Español)



## **An Accompanier & Educator** **(Savoir-faire – Knowing what to do)**

**Proclamation** (2 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Proclamación** (2 semanas, Español), Digital Academy)

**Proclamación** (2 sesiones, Español, in-person or live virtual option)

and 1 of the following

**Catechetical Methods** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Métodos catequéticos** (5 sesiones, in-person, Español)

**Roman Catholic Catechesis for Faith Formation** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

and

**A Retreat or Day of Reflection** – often provided by the parish or a Catholic retreat center, focused on deepening the catechist's own journey in faith



# Level II: Master Parish Catechist

● **Old Testament** - a survey course of the Old Testament

Old Testament (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Antiguo Testamento (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

Antiguo Testamento (6 semanas, CAMINO, Español)

● **New Testament** - a survey course of the New Testament

New Testament (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Nuevo Testamento (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

● **Christology** - a study of the person and mission of Jesus Christ

Christology (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Jesucristo, Dios y Hombre verdadero (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

Cristología: Toda la Vida de Cristo es un Misterio (5 semanas, CAMINO, Español)

● **Ecclesiology** - a study of the Church's nature and mission

Ecclesiology – Beginnings of the Church (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Eclesiología | Iglesia (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

Eclesiología: Pueblo de Dios Llamado a la Comunión (5 semanas, CAMINO, Español)

● **Sacraments** - a study of their role in the Church and the lives of the faithful

**The Sacraments** (Doctrinal Foundations 2) – (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

Sacraments (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Sacramentos (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

● **Liturgy** - a study of the rich meaning within the liturgy and its importance to our lives of faith

Introduction to Liturgy (5 weeks, VLCFF)

Introducción a la Liturgia (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)



● **Catholic Morality** - a study of moral principles leading to lived actions

**Catholic Morality/Christian Living** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Introduction to Christian Morality** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Moralidad Cristiana** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

● **Catholic Social Teaching** - a study of key teachings considered fundamental to Christian living

**Survey of Catholic Social Teaching** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Doctrina Social de la Iglesia** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

**La Enseñanza Social Católica** (6 semanas, CAMINO, Español)

● **Church History** - a study of the development of the Church through the ages

**Church History I: Early Church to Vatican II** (5 weeks, Digital Academy)

**Church History I** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Church History 2** (5 weeks, VLCFF)

**Historia de la Iglesia I** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

**Historia de la Iglesia II** (5 semanas, VLCFF, Español)

### **Renewing Parish Catechist Certificates**

Parish catechist certificates remain valid for five years, after which they may be renewed by acquiring forty hours of continuing educational opportunities and formational experiences since the certificate was issued.

**Thirty** of these hours must be achieved through diocesan or parish opportunities offered in the following areas:

**Theology:** Adult education sessions, courses (e.g., traditional or on-line classes, VLCFF, STEP, Echoes of Faith), institutes, or workshops on areas of Catholic theology such as Scripture, Church history, sacraments, liturgy, morality, Catholic social justice teachings, etc.

**Catechetical Methods:** Workshops, courses (e.g., traditional or on-line classes), institutes, or in-services related to understanding catechetical methods and processes, such as session planning, use of media, creating a catechetical/learning environment, ways of praying, etc.

**Catechist Development:** Workshops, courses, institutes, or in-services on communications and listening skills, stages of moral, psychological or faith development as related to catechesis.

**Ten** hours must be achieved through formational experiences such as retreats, days of recollection, parish missions, etc.