

Curriculum

Based on the three areas of formation identified in the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC), the following components for catechist formation should be followed.

BEING...The Faithful Disciple

The catechist's - spiritual life and human experience is critically important. Many catechists begin simply as well—intentioned volunteers. Not all will embrace the richness of catechetical ministry. To do so, one needs to appreciate that a catechist is one who receives and responds to a ministerial call that comes from the Lord and is articulated in the local church. Catechists need to explore the depth of their “call” on a regular basis. Such topics to be explored are:

- The personal faith journey of the catechist
- The vocation of the catechist
- The role of the catechist in the Church's ministry
- The qualities of a catechist as expressed in contemporary Church documents
- The role of the Spirit in catechetical ministry
- The qualities of the catechist as:
 - Storyteller
 - Teacher/companion
 - Leader of prayer
 - Witness for justice

KNOWING...The Catholic Faith Well

The GDC emphasizes the importance of the catechist having “sufficient knowledge of the message.” Based on the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the fifth area identified in the GDC, Scripture, the following areas need to be addressed:

The Creed – core beliefs of the community

- God, the Creator of all that exists
- God's revelation in human history
- The call to relationship that God offers to each human being
- Faith as a response to God's call
- Scripture and Sacred Tradition as the primary modes of God's revelation
- Jesus Christ as the fullness of God's revelation
- God as a Trinity of persons-God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit
- The Incarnation
- The Holy Spirit as animator of the community of faith
- The Church as the Body of Christ, the community of believers

KNOWING...The Catholic Faith Well (continued)

Liturgy and Sacraments – signs and symbols

- The meaning of ritual
- The nature of liturgy
- The relationship of liturgy to the Paschal mystery
- The celebration of liturgy in a cycle of time
- The role of space, music and cultural expression in liturgy
- The importance of the assembly in liturgical celebration
- The way in which symbolic actions express meaning and invite participation
- The relationship of the seven sacraments to the fundamental experience of human life
- The centrality of the Eucharist in the Church
- Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as the sacraments of initiation
- Penance/Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick as the sacraments of healing
- The sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony as celebrating the two central vocations at the service of the community

Morality – how we live as followers of Jesus Christ, who described himself as, “the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

- Human dignity and community as the foundations of the moral life
- The value of and integration of Catholic social teaching
- The meaning of virtue and its foundations in the teachings of Jesus
- The implications of the Beatitudes and Corporal Works of Mercy for daily life
- The meaning and validity of objective morality; the sources for arriving at objective moral truth
- The delicate relationship between objective moral truth and subjective or personal responsibility
- Moral actions as the responses one makes to the grace offered by a loving God
- Moral actions as a combination of act, intention, and circumstance
- The nature, origin, and degrees of sin
- The effects of sin on the individual and the community
- The nature of conscience and the process of informing one’s conscience
- The timeless quality and universal validity of the Commandments
- The relationship of the Commandments to the new law of Jesus Christ

Prayer and Spirituality – our relationship with God. Prayer is placed within the context of one’s spirituality; the name given to the entire life lived in response to God’s call.

- The basic dynamic of prayer as listening and responding to God’s call
- Mary as the perfect model of acceptance and response to God’s call
- The relationship between personal prayer and the community of faith
- The various prayer forms through which we make our response to God
- Obstacles to the life of prayer
- The Holy Spirit as source of our prayer response
- The Our Father as the bedrock of Christian prayer

KNOWING...The Catholic Faith Well (continued)

Scripture – the “soul of all theological study”

- A general overview of the Old Testament and the New Testament and central themes
- The formation of the Scriptures over time
- The importance of context when reading the Bible
- Literary forms found in the Bible
- The meaning of inspiration the establishment of the canon of the Scriptures
- The biblical themes of covenant and freedom
- The source of the Bible’s holiness
- The root story of the Exodus
- The relationship of Jesus’ saving action to the Exodus event
- The basic message of Jesus in the gospels
- The role of Paul in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ

DOING...Catechesis Effectively

The challenge before every catechist is to create a dynamic, interactive & creative experience each time his/her group gathers. The catechist is like a symphony conductor who interprets the musical score as all the different instruments are brought together into a unique expression. In order to accomplish this In a faith formation setting, a catechist will need to know:

- How to shape a social environment in which faith can be nurtured
- How to create a good and safe physical environment
- How to use creative activities in learning
- How to develop successful session plans
- How to help learners to pray together
- Practical skills related to the specific age level of their learners
- Characteristics of human developmental
- Characteristics of the developmental faith stages
- Appropriate prayer forms that will lead to the inclusion of all children
- Characteristics of cognitive, psychosocial, moral and faith growth; catechists will come to understand how learners build knowledge, construct meaning & relate to others