

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The following steps will help to ensure the effectiveness of the catechist certification process:

Step One-Value of Formation

Catechists, especially new catechists, need to be informed about the process and its purpose. If the catechists understand the process as a support to their personal faith and to their ministry, they are more likely to appropriate its value. Formation should be seen as an integral dimension of their catechetical ministry and therefore needs to be addressed as an expectation from the time of the initial interview with the catechist. **Duplicate the brochure (2 sided trifold) in the Catechist Resource Section of this book and give to each catechist.**

Step Two-Adult Learning

Since catechist formation is adult education it should employ adult learning models. It must be based on the needs of the participants. Informal needs assessment can take place in interviews or through observations. Planning and goal setting are valuable times for assessing catechist formational needs. **Give each catechist a copy of the materials in the Catechist Certification Users Guide section, so they may keep a copy for their record.**

Step Three-Formational Opportunities

Communication, given well in advance, hopefully increases attendance. The parish catechetical leader can help catechists choose formation events that are offered both inside and outside of the parish. Catechists may need assistance in selecting workshops, books, AV tapes, which will address their individual needs, enhance their particular roles and provide a balanced theological foundation. **Remind the catechist to complete the CATECHIST RECORD OF FORMATION and to return the form to you .**

Step Four-Follow Up

Catechists need opportunities to share what they have learned, to exchange insights and to integrate the new knowledge into their catechetical ministry. **When the catechist returns the CATECHIST RECORD OF FORMATION (see attached Form A) , the parish catechetical leader should discuss with the catechist the formation experience. This exchange could be affirming and helpful to the integration process. This would be an appropriate time to update the catechist permanent file as well. Be sure the parish file and the catechist file agree.**

Step Five—Submission

The Parish Catechetical Leader prepares the catechist materials for submission. Use the appropriate forms for the level of certification being requested.(Form B,C, or D) Note: All supporting **documentation** should be kept in the catechist's permanent file.

The catechist record and the request form should be forwarded to:

**Religious Education Office
402 S Independence Blvd
Romeoville, IL 60446
Attention:
Catechist Certification**

Step Six--Recognition

Public recognition for catechists' participation in the formation/certification process can provide motivation to all catechists and witness to the entire parish community. Catechetical Sunday is a great time to acknowledge all catechists and in a special way those who have attained a certification level.

ADULT LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

Adults learn best when they are directly involved in the educational process.

Adult methodology is based on an attitude of respect and reverence for catechists. It affirms catechists as adult learners by acknowledging their ability to assimilate the material with their own life experience. Some suggestions:

- **The session content and process takes into consideration the formational needs of the participants. Catechists have the opportunity to add input about their own expectations.**
- **The scheduling of formation sessions takes into consideration the time constraints and obligations of the catechist. The program is publicized well in advance.**
- **The environment for the formation session is comfortable, conducive to learning, and encourages interaction among the participants.**
- **Catechists are seen as peers of the presenter. The relationship is one of equality and mutuality whereby all are learners.**
- **The agenda for the gathering is presented at the outset and the purpose, goals, expectations and requirements are made clear.**
- **The process used in the formation sessions encourage the catechists to reflect on their own experiences and acknowledges these experiences as a valid source of learning. The process both affirms and challenges the catechist.**
- **Small group discussion and other interactive or reflective techniques for engaging participants and encouraging the catechist participation are utilized.**
- **The process allows time and space for catechists to assimilate and integrate what has been learned.**
- **Evaluation is always part of the process. The catechists are given the opportunity to comment on the value of what is being learned and the teaching techniques used. This information will guide future planning.**

Parish-based formation

Many parishes provide formation for their catechists right in the parish. In scheduling parish-based opportunities, the parish catechetical leader often presents the material and engages the catechists in the adult learning process during regular catechist meetings or on special occasions. Other parish staff members can be invited to lead a formation session. Catechists are encouraged to take part in other parish adult education programs, which will help them fulfill the certification requirements.

Some parishes provide speakers from outside the parish as well. Neighboring catechetical leaders invite one another to be presenters. It is important that the people selected as presenters have a sensitivity to the cultural heritage of the catechists, sufficient background in the subject area, an understanding of contemporary catechesis and an ability to engage participants in an appropriate adult learning process.

Parish-based formation offers the opportunity to bring catechists from various ministry areas together for common formation (i.e. school teachers, RE, Youth Ministry, etc.)

Echoes of faith

This is a video-assisted training program produced by Resources for Christian Living. It is the recommended video-assisted program for FOUNDATIONAL CERTIFICATION. A special price is offered to all parishes of the Joliet Diocese. You can contact Kathy Wolf, our sales representative at (toll free:) 1-877-275-4725 ext. 3502 or by email at kwolf@rcl-enterprises.com

Echoes of Faith is not the only source for certification. Other programs can be utilized at the discretion of the parish catechetical leader.

Cluster/region and diocesan formation

Providing catechist formation is a challenging endeavor, which requires a commitment of time and resources. Many parish catechetical leaders have found it helpful to work together with their peers. Pooling talent and parish resources often enhances the formation opportunities. Area events usually draw larger number of catechists, which allows for targeted topics to be offered. For example, one workshop can address working with primary grade children while another may focus on working with parents in a sacramental preparation program.

Diocesan Offices those both within our diocese and those from neighboring dioceses offer a wide spectrum of opportunities throughout the year. The Quest Series offers many possibilities. Also, please refer to the program calendar from the Joliet Diocesan Ministry Formation Office. Participation in the “New Wine” program will help fulfill certification requirements.

Catholic schoolteachers can earn credit toward catechist certification by their participation in Catholic school in-services offered either by the region or the diocese.

As a by-product, joint formation sessions also provide catechists an opportunity to learn about catechetical situations in other parishes, which enriches their perspective of the catechetical mission of the church.

ACADEMIC COURSES (credit & non-credit)

Catechists who participate in undergraduate or graduate studies should be given credit if the topics studied meet

certification requirements. See the CEU conversion chart attachment A . The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation. University of Dayton an internet based distance learning initiative which supports adult faith, lay ecclesial ministry and catechetical formation of the Church. Parish catechetical leaders should help catechists integrate the learning experience into their particular catechetical setting.

Please go to our website www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo and click on University of Dayton Online for more information.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Such options as videotapes, audiotapes, printed materials can be offered to the catechist for individual study. These can be based on the catechists' interests and needs. However, some process for sharing should be included – a discussion with or written report to the parish catechetical leader, a gathering with other catechists, or a presentation to some of the catechist's colleagues. Use the Catechist Formation Report Form A

CONCLUSION

All these formats can help catechists on their journey toward certification. These are only suggestions and you should not feel limited to only these ideas. If you have any questions, please contact the Joliet Diocesan Religious Education Office (815-727-6411).

CREDITS AND TRANSFERS

Credit for past formation

If the catechist completed the previous diocesan initial certification program the following credits can be made - (4) hours in KNOWING and (2) hours in DOING. Records are available at the REO.

Credit may be granted at the discretion of the parish catechetical leader, for formation work completed during the

previous three academic years (2000-2003). Hours of credit may be granted for all previously documented formation work in these years, as well as any work based on recollection for these years.

Additionally, credit may be granted for any specific documented formation work (possessed either by the parish or the catechist) dating back as far as July, 1991. Only documentation that was generated on or near the time of the formation work may receive credit. Only documentation that **contains specific information on the work of an individual catechist may receive such credit.**

Credit for protecting God's children

As catechists complete this program, up to 50% of the 3 hour workshop (1.5 hours) can be applied to catechist formation according to the discretion of the parish catechetical leader. This credit should be recorded in the DOING category.

Certification/formation from other dioceses

Catechist certification achieved in another (arch) diocese that is equivalent to or greater than our own will be accepted. Catechists should submit a written request to their former parish catechetical leader for their formation records. A new certificate will not be issued to these individuals. These catechists are encouraged to participate in whatever would be their next level of certification.

Formation from other dioceses should be appropriately credited and transferred into our certification program.

Catechists Who Join A New Parish

When catechists move within the Diocese, they should make a written request to the former parish to have a copy of their Catechist Certification Record sent to the new parish. The new parish should accept all previous credit.