

COMPONENTS OF THE DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL FORMATION PROGRAM

The *Diocese of Nashville Catechetical Formation Program* offers each catechist the opportunity to fulfill certification requirements, earn the title of Certified Catechist, 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:

- I. **Orientation:** The video-based orientation sets forth a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of catechesis according to the mind and the heart of the Church and explains the requirements of the Diocesan Catechetical Formation program. Included in this presentation are practical components of catechesis: ecclesial methodology, creating a positive teaching-learning environment, lesson planning (scope and sequence), classroom management.
- II. **Catechist Certification:** Truths of the Faith (Creed, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer). Integral to Catechist Formation is a systematic presentation of the deposit of faith. Every catechist should have a competent knowledge of the Church's teachings, which they in turn can share with others. This knowledge must rest both in the mind and the heart so that the catechist loves the Truth they know. Added to this content is the component of methodology. Included in the methods presentations are practical components of catechesis: ecclesial methodology, creating a positive teaching-learning environment, lesson planning (scope and sequence), classroom management. Due attention is given to helping the catechist develop a "spirituality of the catechist" which will sustain them through the apostolate of catechesis. Sacred Art is also incorporated throughout the program of studies. Sacred art "should be worthy, becoming, and beautiful, signs and symbols of things supernatural" (Cf. NDC 37B, SC 122).

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).

- III. **Renewing Certification:** Emphasis on the "Spirituality of the Catechist" throughout the program. Catechists must have a deep spirituality, i.e. they must live in the Spirit, who will help them to renew themselves continually in their specific identity. Various events, retreats, conferences are sponsored by the Diocese to foster within the catechist a growth in grace.

The need for a spirituality proper to catechists springs from their vocation and mission. It includes, therefore, a new and special motivation, a call to sanctity. Pope John Paul II's saying: "The true missionary is the saint", can be applied without hesitation to the catechist. Like every member of the faithful, catechists are "called to holiness and to mission", i.e. to live out their own vocation "with the fervour of the saints". (Guide for Catechists, 6)

In many schools and parishes, these elements may already exist. However, in some cases content may not be strong enough or may not exist, and needs to be added or implemented entirely. Schools may wish to emphasize only those areas that are pertinent to the experience of their teachers. For example, teachers in Catholic schools may not need to be exposed to the lesson planning component, but they may need an emphasis on developing a more positive teaching-learning environment or the incorporation of religious art in their lesson planning. This Program will formalize for the Diocese a systematic process of catechist formation.

OVERVIEW

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. Every three years, the certificate must be renewed.

EARNING THE CATECHIST CERTIFICATE (6 Courses)

To achieve certification — **INSTRUCTION & BINDER (30 hours of Study)**

The “Aquinas College Catechist Formation Curriculum Course of Study”. The catechist must attend 6 Formation Sessions in the course of 3 years. (5 hours per session = **30 hours**). This may be accomplished quicker with a combination of live classes and online classes.

RENEWING CATECHIST CERTIFICATION (18 Hours every 3 YEARS)

To renew certification — **ON-GOING FORMATION*** -- Once a catechist has received certification, they participate in on-going formation. There is a minimum of six (6) Notional Learning Hours per year for three (3) years.

INDEPENDENT & ON-GOING FORMATION NOTIONAL LEARNING HOURS

Pastors, Directors of Religious Education, Catechetical Leaders, and Principals of Catholic schools will be notified of special lectures, seminars, workshops, etc., that will be offered for optional notional hours not specifically stated in this document.

In order to receive proper credit for these hours, the catechist must verify participation by including one of the following documents in the binder: 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.

EXPLANATION OF NOTIONAL LEARNING HOURS

“Notional Learning Hours” are not a precise measure but *provide catechists with an indication of the amount of study and degree of commitment expected*. Notional learning time includes instructional time (lectures, sessions, seminars, workshops, catechetical work etc.), as well as time spent on 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.

TRANSFERING CERTIFICATION

A catechist who has been certified in *another diocese* must attend the Orientation Session. They then 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 Pastor, Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, or Principal of the Catholic school will determine the status of the catechist in meeting the necessary criteria for diocesan certification. 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.

TRANSFERING HOURS

Catechist who began the Certification Process with another diocese should enroll in the Diocesan Catechetical Formation Program. Depending on the number of hours and course of study completed the catechist may be exempt from some of the Aquinas College Directed Course of Study. Catechists should complete a Record of Study and meet with his / her Catechetical Leader to determine the best program of study for formation.

RENEWAL SEALS

In order to maintain certification, the catechist must continue his/her ongoing formation in the faith. *Catechist Renewal Seals* will be awarded to those who have received the Catechist Certificate. Catechists must earn eighteen (18) notional learning hours during the three (3) years following their reception of the Catechist Certificate. At the completion of the eighteen (18) hours a *Renewal Seal* is affixed to the Catechist Certificate. The renewal process (completion of 18 hours ongoing formation) is to be repeated every three years thereafter.

INSTRUCTION

“The Aquinas College Catechist Formation Curriculum”*

READ SESSION CONTENT ACROSS PAGE

Each Session of Instruction Includes Content on the Creed, Sacraments, Morality, Prayer and Methodology

CCA = United States Catholic Catechism for Adults **CCC** = Catechism of the Catholic Church

YEAR ONE						
COURSE 1	<p style="text-align: center;">CREED</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I believe...</i> Faith Dogma Magisterium</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SACRAMENTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Baptism Introduction to Sacraments Man – Image of God Original Sin</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MORALITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Life in Christ I</i> Human Dignity Moral Act Virtue/Sin</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PRAYER</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Man’s Desire for God</i> Faith Reason</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">METHODS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Ecclesial Method and 5 Principles of Catechesis</i></p>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
SOURCES	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 Proclaim the Gospel • Chapter 4 Obedience of Faith <p>CCC</p> <p>#26-49; 142-197</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6 In the Beginning • Chapter 15 Becoming a Christian <p>CCC</p> <p>#279-354; 355-421; 1210-1285</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 23 Life in Christ Part I <p>CCC</p> <p>#1691-1876</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 My Soul Longs for You, O God <p>CCC</p> <p>#1- 25; 2558-2597</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCC</p> <p>#1163-1209</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	
COURSE 2	<p style="text-align: center;">CREED</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Trinity</i> God the Father Son Holy Spirit</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SACRAMENTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Confirmation Consecrated for Mission</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MORALITY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Life in Christ II</i> Moral Law Grace Justification</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PRAYER</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Revelation</i> Scripture Tradition</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">METHODS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Catechesis in the Heart and Mind of the Church</i></p>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
SOURCES	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 I Believe in God • Chapter 9 Receive the Holy Spirit <p>CCC</p> <p>#198-354; 683-747</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 16 Confirmation: Consecrated for Mission <p>CCC</p> <p>#1285-1321</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 24 Life in Christ Part II <p>CCC</p> <p>#1949-2051</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 God Comes to Meet Us <p>CCC</p> <p>#50-141</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	

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YEAR TWO						
COURSE 3	<p>CREED</p> <p><i>The Word made flesh</i> Christ Passion Resurrection</p>	<p>SACRAMENTS</p> <p><i>The Eucharist: Source and Summit</i></p>	<p>MORALITY</p> <p><i>Love of God</i> 1st Commandment 2nd Commandment 3rd Commandment</p>	<p>PRAYER</p> <p><i>The Liturgy</i> Definition</p>	<p>METHODS</p> <p><i>Liturgical Catechesis</i></p>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 The Good News • Chapter 8 Death & Resurrection <p>CCC #422-483; 512-682</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 17 The Eucharist <p>CCC #1322-1419</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 25 Believe in God • Chapter 26 God's Name • Chapter 27 The Lord's Day <p>CCC #2052-2195</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 The Paschal Mystery <p>CCC #1066-1162 1187-1209</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 17 The Eucharist <p>CCC #2623-2696</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	
COURSE 4	<p>CREED</p> <p><i>The Church</i> Origin Four Marks Body of Christ</p>	<p>SACRAMENTS</p> <p><i>Holy Orders</i> Deaconate Priesthood Episcopacy</p>	<p>MORALITY</p> <p><i>The Gift of Life</i> 4th Commandment 5th Commandment</p>	<p>PRAYER</p> <p><i>Christ at Prayer</i> The Our Father</p>	<p>METHODS</p> <p><i>The Liturgical Year</i></p>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10 The Church • Chapter 11 The Four Marks <p>CCC #748-896; 946-962</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 20 Holy Orders <p>CCC #1533-1600</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 28 Strengthen Your Family • Chapter 29 The Culture of Life <p>CCC #2196-2257; 2258-2330</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 36 Jesus Taught Us to Pray <p>CCC #422-682 2598-2622 2746-2865</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	<p>CCA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 17 The Eucharist <p>CCC #2623-2696</p> <p><u>Sacred Art</u></p>	

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YEAR THREE						
COURSE 5	CREED <i>Our Eternal Destiny</i> Death Judgment Heaven and Hell	SACRAMENTS <i>Blessed are the Merciful</i> Penance Anointing	MORALITY <i>Social Justice</i> 7 th Commandment 8 th Commandment 10 th Commandment	PRAYER <i>A Life of Prayer</i> Liturgy of the Hours Meditation Contemplation <i>Lectio Divina</i>	METHODS <i>Using Scripture to Pray and Teach</i>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
	CCA • Chapter 13 Our Eternal Destiny	CCA • Chapter 18 God is Rich in Mercy • Chapter 19 Anointing the Sick and the Dying	CCA • Chapter 31 Do Not Steal • Chapter 32 Tell the Truth • Chapter 34 Poverty of Spirit	CCA • Chapter 35 God Calls Us to Pray		
SOURCES	CCC #988-1065	CCC #975-987 1420-1532	CCC #1877-1948; 2401-2513; 2534-2557	CCC #2697-2745	CCC #2623-2696	
	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	

COURSE 6	CREED <i>Mary, Mother of Christ</i>	SACRAMENTS <i>Marriage</i> Consecrated Life Laity	MORALITY <i>Blessed are the Pure of Heart</i> 6 th Commandment 9 th Commandment	PRAYER <i>Popular Devotions</i> Saints Litanies Sacramentals	METHODS <i>Teaching with the Saints</i>	Home Study: Personal Reflection
	CCA • Chapter 12 Mary, the Church's First and Most Perfect Mother	CCA • Chapter 21 Sacrament of Marriage	CCA • Chapter 30 Marital Fidelity • Chapter 33 Purity of Heart	CCA • Chapter 22 Sacramentals and Popular Devotions		
SOURCES	CCC #484-511; 963-975	CCC #897-945 1601-1666	CCC #2331-2400; 2514-2533	CCC #1667-1690		
	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	Sacred Art	

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THE CATECHIST BINDER

RATIONALE

The Catechist Binder can showcase the potential of the Catechist. The very act of organizing a portfolio brings clarity to the catechetical formation process. The process requires reflection and analysis. When the catechist sequences his or her own information, he/she begins to think more broadly about the many talents and gifts with which he/she has been blessed by God. It forces the catechist to think more deeply about his or her calling in the handing on of the truths of the faith and the need for personal faith development and growth.

A well-prepared portfolio:

- Provides “evidence” of one’s growth, accomplishments, skills and abilities
- Documents the participation, scope and quality of experiences and training opportunities of the catechist
- Supplies a means in which the catechist may begin to collect samples and resources to aid in teaching the truths of the faith
- Offers an effective way to evaluate personal progress and growth through an established course of study
- Is specifically designed to support the catechist with a method of keeping up with materials received toward certification requirements

Materials distributed will be three-hole punched for easy filing. The portfolio is limited only by the catechist’s imagination. It is designed by the catechist to help present the best “picture” of his/her ministry of teaching and learning.

WHY USE THE BINDER?

- Focuses on education opportunities, teaching and volunteer efforts
- Helps the catechist analyze what, when, why, how, and with whom
- Notes the skills and qualities of the catechist
- Presents sample work and narratives of what has been studied and/or taught
- Organizes materials chronologically by date, by function, theme, skill, or event
- Demonstrates concrete proof of skills and learning
- Provides an opportunity for creative self-expression, self-discovery and self-evaluation
- Acts as an assessment instrument for recognition of learning experiences, skills, and knowledge
- Provides a means of proof for awarding catechist certification for learning-teaching skills and content in the Catholic faith

SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

PORTFOLIO SECTIONS:

It is suggested that you include the following materials in your Portfolio:

Section I: Personal (Include “Application of Catechist” in this document)

Section II: Catechetical Formation Program materials received from instructional seminars: Creed, Sacraments, Morality, Prayer, Methodology, Sacred Art and Home Study Reflections

Section III: Volunteer or Professional Opportunities

Section IV: Resources

Section Information Guidelines

- Use dividers that indicate each section in the Portfolio.

Collecting and Organizing Samples

- Keep to a consistent format: Label or Divide Sections
- Include
 - Sessions, Workshops, Lectures, Training Opportunities, Volunteer Work, etc.
 - Reports, Observations of Teaching (when you are formally evaluated)
 - Program Materials Developed or Used, Projects, Pictures, etc. (everything you want to record and keep)
 - Resources and Networking: People and Materials Relevant to your Ministry as a Catechist
 - Certificates received for attendance at sessions/conferences, etc.

Renewing the Certificate

On-going Formation for Certified Catechists

Every catechist is called to holiness through an ongoing transformation in Christ. Every individual has the responsibility to grow in faith and to contribute to the building up of the kingdom of God on earth. For this reason, every person involved in handing on the truths of the faith must take seriously the need to grow in knowledge of Truth and to impart the Gospel message with love.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* offers guidelines for ongoing formation of the intellectual, spiritual, and apostolic life of the catechist.

Ongoing catechesis requires the best efforts of all engaged in ministry in the Church, as well as, tireless dedication to be faithful to Christ's message of Truth and love. Faithful and skilled catechists can be powerful instruments in proclaiming the Gospel and fostering growth and faith in the Church. Therefore, the Church strongly encourages those engaged as catechists and catechetical leaders to be grounded in the Truth.

Persons engaged in the "Deepening Spirituality" process may attend approved sessions offered on topics that relate to the catechetical needs of the times, such as:

- Liturgy, the Sacraments
- Sacred Scripture
- Commandments
- Faith, Spirituality
- Moral and/or Social Justice Issues, Inculturation
- Mary and the Saints
- The Church, Church History
- Eschatology
- Catechesis, Communication Skills
- Content of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church/United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

Accepted as Proof of Attendance:

- Copy of the Program brochure
- Certificate of Attendance
- Registration form
- Materials received, etc.

***Catholic Conferences offered by the diocese are strongly encouraged and will be accepted for credit. For conference offerings, please check with the diocese at:
<http://www.dioceseofnashville.com>***

IN A NUTSHELL

- **WHAT?** The **Catechetical Formation Program** is the Diocesan Program for the formation of all catechists.
- **WHO*?** Strictly speaking a *catechist* is one who “**hands on the faith**”—one who “**echoes**” the **teachings of the Catholic Church** to a new generation. This includes parents who the primary catechists for their children.
- **HOW?** The Catechetical Formation Program provides the training for the initial catechist certification which must be renewed every 3 years.
- **WHERE?** At selected parishes and schools throughout the diocese and online at: www.aquinascollegecatechetics.com/CFP

*Some principals and pastors wisely ask that all of their school teachers receive formation in the Catholic faith. However, only a Catholic may apply for Catechist Certification. Catholics who are not “religion teachers” in a school are recommended to receive certification that they may be ready to serve the Church as a catechist either at home or in a parish program.

CHILD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS: In accordance with Diocesan Policy, every catechist must show verification of compliance with the Child Protection Policy and Background Check. Training is offered at the parish/school level.

ABBREVIATIONS

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

THE HEART OF CATECHESIS

Every child is a gift from God and has a right to be taught the message of Jesus Christ. The message concerning the life, works, and words of Jesus, as expressed in Sacred Scripture and Tradition and are communicated to us as a living reality through the Magisterium (teaching office) of the Church. The goal is Life itself — the life of Christ and life everlasting. In the words of the psalmist, Jesus is the “lamp for our feet” — to enrich and guide us along the way of redemption (Cf. *Jn* 10:10).

What catechists are called to today, as Pope John XXIII, stated in his opening words to the Second Vatican Council, is “*the renewed, serene and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness, as it still shines forth in the Acts of the Council of Trent and the First Vatican Council (Discourse at the Opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 1962).*”

During the Pontificate of our beloved John Paul II, these words took on an even stronger emphasis by offering the Church a “reference text” entitled the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for a catechesis renewed at the living sources of the faith. In his encyclical entitled “*On Catechesis in Our Time*” (*Catechesi Tradendae*), he states that the principal role will be to bring about and maintain in our churches a “real passion for catechesis”. John Paul II reiterated the importance of priests as “instructors in the faith” by devoting their best efforts to the growth of their communities in the truths of the faith. He emphasized the importance given to catechesis by stating that “all believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it”. He further encouraged consecrated religious and the faithful to assist in this specific work of catechesis (Cf. *CT* 64-65).

Furthermore, the Spirit’s mission is also to transform all followers into witnesses to Christ: “He will bear witness to Me; and you also are witnesses” (*Jn* 15:26-27).

It is clear that the mission of catechesis is a vitally important one. In carrying out Her mission, it is clear that the Church — and every person devoting himself/herself to that mission in Her name, must be very much aware of acting “*as a living pliant instrument of the Holy Spirit. To invoke this Spirit constantly, to be in communion with Him, to endeavor to know His authentic inspirations must be the attitude of the teaching Church and of every catechist*” (Cf. *CT* 72).

It is within this call to renew catechetical dynamism in the Church, that this *Catechetical Formation Program* has been developed. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose unique vocation included being the teacher of her Son, this program has been developed. The *Diocese of Nashville Catechetical Formation Program* has a strong commitment to the truths of the Catholic Church and the mission of teaching the message of Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher.

The *Diocese of Nashville Catechetical Formation Program* supports one level of certification for the ministry of religious education in both parish and school programs. Catechist certification verifies that a person has completed certain core requirements based on the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, ecclesial methodology, and the *National Directory for Catechesis*. The *Catechetical Formation Program* offers a three year cycle of basic knowledge components as presented in this document, as well as optional opportunities for Notional Learning Hours and ongoing formation.

Diocesan courses completed toward previous certification standards may be accepted by the Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, or Principal of the Catholic school. Equivalent coursework from another parish, Catholic college/university or diocese will be reviewed by the local Catechetical Leader and/or pastor for correlation to the content of the *Catechism*.

*At the heart of catechesis we find in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father . . . who suffered and died for us and who now, **after rising, is living with us forever** (Cf. CT 5).*

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).

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 knowledge of how to impart those truths. The catechist should be vibrant with human interest and 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!*

THE CALL: APOSTLE OF LOVE AND TRUTH

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 universally 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 essentially 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 (*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.

FUNDAMENTAL TASKS 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):

6 fundamental tasks of Catechesis:

1. *–promote knowledge of the faith.*
 2. *–promote meaningful participation in liturgical worship and the sacramental life of the Church.*
 3. *–integrate moral formation into a Christian way of life.*
 4. *–teach Christians how to pray with Christ, in Christ, and in communion with the Church.*
 5. *–initiate the Christian into the life of the local church community and fosters active participation in the mission of the Church.*
 6. *–promote 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 an effective evangelization of the youth of 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).

RATIONALE FOR A FORMATION PROGRAM

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*.

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)

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]

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).*

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).

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

- **Pillar One** **The Creed** (the Faith professed): the Christian mystery is the object of faith
- **Pillar Two** **The Sacraments** (the faith celebrated): the Christian message is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions
- **Pillar Three** **Christian Morality** (the Faith lived): the Christian message is present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions
- **Pillar Four** **Prayer** (the Faith prayed): 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).

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 catechists use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Catholic Catechism for Adults* together. 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* 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

FORMING CATECHISTS 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 AND THOSE WHO ASSIST HIM **DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, CATECHETICAL LEADER,** **OR PRINCIPAL OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Under the direction of the Pastor, the Director of Religious Education, Catechetical Leader, 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 assists Catechetical Leaders and Principals in this task through the *Catechetical Formation Program* offered in conjunction 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, “Notional Learning Hours” (defined later in this document), and formation needs (form provided in this document)
4. Forward the proper documentation for Catechist Certification to the diocesan office

Every parish and school catechist is strongly encouraged to meet certification standards within a three (3) to four (4) 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.

In addition, catechists should satisfy the following pre-requisites:

- Be fully initiated in the faith; faithfully attend Mass
- 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

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 by 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 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).

ECCLESIAL METHODOLOGY: A METHOD FOR HANDING ON THE FAITH

“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).

TEXTS: REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED

REQUIRED TEXTS FOR EACH CATECHIST

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (CCC) 2nd ed. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. United State Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Washington, D.C., 2000.
2. *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (CCA)*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Washington, D.C., 2007.
3. *The Holy Bible*. Catholic edition.
4. “On Catechesis in Our Time”, *Catechesi Tradendae*, (CT) 1979.
5. *The General Directory for Catechesis*, (GDC). Congregation for the Clergy. 1998
7. *The Craft of Catechesis*. Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, & Petroc Willey. Ignatius Press, 2008.

BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR REFERENCE FOR THE PARISH AND/OR SCHOOL

It is highly recommended that the following resources be available for reference for Catechists:

8. *Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church*. USCCB, 2006.
9. *Study Guide for the U.S. Adult Catechism*. Jean Sullivan. Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2006.
10. *National Directory for Catechesis*. Committee on Catechesis. USCCB, 2005 (NDC).
11. “*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*” (RDECS). Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.
12. *The Catholic Source Book: A Comprehensive Collection of Information about the Catholic Church*. Rev. Peter Klein. BROWN-ROA (a division of Harcourt Brace and Company), 2008.
13. *Summary of the National Directory for Catechesis*. Committee on Catechesis. USCCB, 2006.
14. *Catechetical Documents. Vatican Council II: Volume I: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New.rev.ed. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996.
15. *The Catechetical Documents: A Parish Resource*. Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago, IL, 1996.