

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a catechist?

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

What is a certified catechist?

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

Why should I become certified?

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

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

Begin by registering for “Catechist Orientation: The Heart of Catechesis in the Mind of the Church.” Register for this course by going to the diocesan website (dioknox.org), click on “events.” Next, click on “event registration” and select Catechist Orientation. The 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.

Why has the Catechetical Formation Program been revised and what are the changes?

The primary aim for revision has been to add greater flexibility to the program; the curriculum used by Aquinas College remains unchanged, as does the scope & sequence. The total number of hours required for certification also remains the same (60hrs), but the format available for completing the program has been expanded to include online courses and independent learning options. For instance, instead of attending the Saturday “live” sessions, a catechist may choose to take the same courses online. Furthermore, courses do not need to be taken in sequence; i.e. Course 1 before Course 2, etc. With greater flexibility in the program, catechists will be better able to complete the program.

What happened to Catechist Levels 1 and 2?

The revised program no longer uses the terms “Catechist Levels 1 and 2,” and the classes in Level 1 are no longer being offered except for the “Catechist Orientation.” The revised program is comprised of three “Phases”: Phase I – Orientation; Phase II – Directed & Independent Instruction; and Phase III – Ongoing Formation.

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What happened to Fall Year 1, Spring Year 1, Fall Year 2, Spring Year 2, etc.?

All Saturday “live” sessions and online classes are now referred to as “Courses.” For instance, Fall Year 1 is now called Course 1, Spring Year 2 is called Course 2, Fall Year 2 is called Course 3 and so on. The content of each Course has remained the same; only the name has changed.

I already began the Catechetical Formation Program and completed the classes from Catechist Level I. Do I still get credit for having taken these?

Yes. These classes now count toward and fulfill the requirements in Phase II. Under Phase II, catechists need to complete ten (10) hours of independent instruction. If a catechist has completed the four (4) classes in Level I (*What We Believe, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer*), he/she has completed ten hours of formation. These ten hours can now be used to fulfill the ten hours required in Phase II.

I was certified in the Diocese of Knoxville under a previous program. Do I need to complete the revised Catechetical Formation Program to become re-certified?

All catechists certified prior to 2008 must attend “Catechist Orientation” and complete the “Catechist Review Course” in order to renew certification. Once these requirements have been met, the catechist will complete the “Application for Renewal of Certification for those certified prior to 2008.” The parish Catechetical Leader will submit the application to the Office of Christian Formation. These catechists will be issued a new certificate which will be valid for three years. Once the new certificate has been issued, catechists must maintain and renew certification through the Phase III: “Deepening Faith” component of the program.

Is the revised Catechetical Formation Program mandatory?

The Bishop of Knoxville has asked that all catechists within the diocese begin the Catechetical Formation Program and that previously certified catechists renew their certification through this program.

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

Those catechists who have completed a degree in Catholic theology, religious education, pastoral studies or related field may qualify for diocesan certification. Catechists who have completed a non-degree certificate program through a college or university may also qualify for diocesan certification. Upon receipt and review of transcripts/course work, the Office of Christian Formation will determine the status of the catechist in meeting the necessary criteria for diocesan certification.

What if I’m not interested in becoming a catechist, may I still take the courses?

Yes. All of the courses offered are open to all adults within the Diocese of Knoxville.

I would like more information about the Diocese of Knoxville Catechetical Formation Program. Whom should I contact?

You may check the Office of Christian Formation webpage on the diocesan website (dioknox.org). You may also contact the Office of Christian Formation at 865-584-3307.