



CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Elementary Teachers and Catechists

1. All **elementary school** catechists, regardless of what subject(s) they teach, are required to complete Catechist Certification Level I within two (2) years of engagement or employment, if they are employed three (3) or more days a week in a Catholic school.
2. All Catechists in a Diocesan Catholic **school or parish** setting who teach religion, even if they work as part-time catechists or are volunteer catechists, must complete Level I and Level II. The Level I certificate should be earned within the first two (2) years of engagement. The Catechist may take up to an additional five (5) years to complete Level II.
3. All **school or parish** Catechists, after the completion of their required level, maintain their certification by completing 30 hours of continuing faith formation to be submitted every three (3) years to the Office of Christian Formation. (OCF)
4. Each **school's Catechist Certification Coordinator** should:
 - Explain in detail the Diocesan Catechist Certification guidelines to new Catechists as well as remind others of the requirements as needed.
 - Distribute the appropriate level personal record form to each new teacher at the beginning of the academic year.
 - Make known opportunities being offered throughout the diocese and maintain records of completion. Opportunities can be found on the www.dosaformation.org website or listed on the weekly *Echoes*, published by the OCF.
 - Suggest appropriate in-service topics to the school principal.
5. Each **parish's DRE/CRE** should:
 - Should maintain a record in the parish offices on each of the Catechists.
 - Explain the diocesan Catechist Certification guidelines in detail to new Catechists, as well as explain to others the requirements as needed.While it is the Catechist's job to fulfill these requirements, the DRE/CRE should make known opportunities being offered throughout the diocese and maintain records of completion. Opportunities can be found on the www.dosaformation.org website or listed on the weekly *Echoes*, published by the OCF.
6. Catechist Certification **Documentation** Requirements:
 - Follow guidelines for completing the Catechist Certification Program Personal Record of Courses for each certification level from the Office of Christian Formation. [See website: www.dosaformation.org]

- The Catechist should keep Course Completion/Attendance Forms until a level is completed, turning in the documentation (certificates of attendance with summaries of the courses) to the School Catechist Coordinator or DRE/CRE.
- When a certification level is completed, the
 - a. School Catechist Coordinator should complete the appropriate form and review the Catechist's documentation. The Coordinator submits the completed form to the school principal for final approval.
 - b. The Parish DRE/CRE should complete the required form and review the Catechist's documentation.
- Completed (including signature of principal or DRE/CRE as local representative) forms with documentation are sent to the Office of Christian Formation.
- After diocesan approval, a copy of the certificate provided by the diocesan office should remain in the Catechist's personnel file at the parish or school along with the documentation, now countersigned by the diocesan official. The original certificate should be given to the Catechist.

7. **Course Completion/Attendance Forms** for each Catechist Certification Level should include the following details:

- instructor's name
- his/her signature (or principal/DRE/CRE signature if the instructor is unavailable to sign)
- date(s) of the course
- number of hours of instruction
- a short summary of the topic

The Catechist should keep Course Completion/Attendance Forms until a level is completed.

Undergraduate or graduate courses in theology or related religion coursework from a Catholic institution completed within the last fifteen (15) years may satisfy a course area requirement. In these cases, the college transcript will serve as documentation. These can be submitted to the OCF for evaluation and approval.

8. **Catechist Level I courses:**

Role of the Catechist:	An overview of effective ways for Catechists to share the Gospel with students and families
Practical Skills:	An exploration of the best methods for developing knowledge of the Faith in students
Scripture:	An overview of both the Old and New Testaments with application for daily life
Church:	An overview of the Church with an emphasis on the documents of Vatican II
Liturgy & Sacraments:	An overview of the sacramental life of the Church and examines communal and personal prayer. Formerly known as Prayer: Personal/ Liturgical
Basic Beliefs:	An overview of the whole Creed and an in-depth examination of a specific area professed in the Creed

- Faith Development:** An examination of the stages of both moral and faith development
- Administrative/Legal:** An overview of the various legal and ethical concerns of Church ministers today. Also known as **Catechetical/Legal or Catechetical/Legal/Administrative**

Attached is a more detailed set of objectives for each course. Readings from the Benziger series *Catechists in Formation* should be used. All schools and parishes have copies of these now out-of-print books.

9. **Catechist Certification Level II** course information is available through the Office of Christian Formation. Live presentations given by qualified persons as described in Number 13 below, the Searchlight Virtual School, or the Satellite Theological Education program (STEP) course package from Notre Dame University designed for the Diocese of St. Augustine are viable options to complete Level II. Ten (10) hours of in-depth instruction in each of the following content areas completes this level:
Scripture, Church History, Morality, Sacraments, Prayer, and Basic Beliefs. Objectives for each course are available on the www.dosaformation.org website. Workshops/Classes for completion of both Levels I and II will be offered by the Office of Christian Formation quarterly.
10. **Catechist Level III** certification is a continuing formation component to help the catechist maintain his/her current level. Every three (3) years, a catechist, principal, DRE/CRE/Diocesan Formation staff member must submit a record of thirty (30) hours of continuing formation. While these hours may be academic in nature, they also may be spiritually enriching activities such as retreats, parish missions, catechism studies, book studies, workshops, Bible studies, conferences like the Men's and Women's Conferences, Eucharist Congress which are led by suitable presenters (see presenter requirements above). The Office of Christian Formation and the Office of Educational Services recommend strongly that these hours be spread over the three (3) years, perhaps setting a goal of ten hours per year.
11. **Catechist Level IV** is achieved in one of the following ways: completion of the Diocese of St. Augustine Ministry Formation Program or by obtaining a Bachelor's degree from an accredited Catholic institution in the area of theology, religious education, or pastoral ministry.
12. **Catechist Level V** is achieved by earning a Master's degree from an accredited Catholic institution in the area of theology, religious education, or pastoral ministry.
13. **Presenters of ...**
- **Level I** courses must possess a B.A. in Religious Education or Theology from an accredited Catholic institution or be graduates of the Ministry Formation Program (MFP).

- **Level II** courses must possess an M.A. in Religious Education or Theology from an accredited Catholic institution or be a member of the ordained clergy. Consecrated religious, who have equivalency of credentials, would also be suitable presenters.
- **Level III** continuing formation should possess the same qualifications as someone who would present Level I or Level II. Exceptions for this should be presented to the Office of Christian Formation for review prior to the catechetical event.

High School Teachers and Catechists

A religion teacher or campus minister in a Catholic high school or parish in the Diocese of St. Augustine must be a practicing Catholic and in good standing in the Church and must be qualified in the following manner:

- Must have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Theology, Religion, Religious Studies, or Theological Studies from a Catholic college or university; if not a certified teacher in these areas, the teacher must be endorsed by the Bishop at the recommendation of the Principal and pastor (if applicable) and complete requirements in professional education study approved by the Principal. The religion teacher then must complete at least 30 hours of approved professional development in the area of religious studies every three (3) years henceforth;

OR,

- Must have at least 12 hours in Theology, Religion, Religious Studies, or Theological Studies from a Catholic college or university and be certified by the State in another academic field and be endorsed by the Bishop at the recommendation of the Principal and pastor (if applicable) The religion teacher then must complete at least 30 hours of approved professional development every three (3) years henceforth (in development related to teaching religion) which can be a portion of the usual certification renewal or Master-In-Service program every five (5) years;

OR,

- Must complete the Ministry Formation Program of the Diocese of St. Augustine (or another comparable Ministry Program approved by the Office of Christian Formation) if a degree is held in Theology, Religion, Religious Studies, or Theological Studies from other than a Catholic college or university (or has fewer than 12 hours from a Catholic college or university) within a time required by the Principal and approved by the Director of Secondary Schools, and be endorsed by the Bishop at the recommendation of the Principal and pastor (if applicable). The religion teacher would also need to become certified in some other subject area or complete professional education which would reasonably equate to professional education study to the satisfaction of the Principal. The religion teacher then must complete at least 30 hours of approved professional development every three (3) years henceforth (in development related to teaching religion) which can be a portion of the usual certification renewal of Master-In-Service program every five (5) years.

- All high school catechists, after the completion of their required level, maintain their certification by completing 30 hours of continuing faith formation to be submitted every three (3) years to the Office of Christian Formation. (OCF)

It is strongly recommended and will eventually become policy that anyone who is the primary religion teacher in the middle school grades of a Catholic elementary school will also earn the above standards. A primary religion teacher teaches three (3) or more classes per day of religion.

Adult Faith Formation, RCIA Catechists, and Youth Ministers

A presenter in an adult faith formation program, an RCIA program, or a youth ministry program should be minimally a graduate of the Ministry Formation Program or ideally possess at least a bachelor's degree in theological studies or religious education from a Catholic college or university.

Approved May, 2009 Bishop Victor Galeone

Updated July 1, 2010 Bishop Victor Galeone

Approved July 1, 2013 Bishop Felipe Estévez