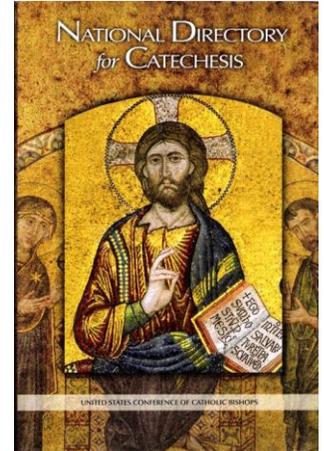


Catechist Formation and the Parish Catechist or Youth Minister

Albany Diocese Vicariate of Catholic Faith Formation & Education

In their *National Directory for Catechesis* the Catholic Bishops of the United States write “... in order to present the Catholic faith in its fullness and in a way that is attractive to each group, those who catechize need preparation and ongoing formation.... catechist formation programs cooperatively developed by parishes and dioceses must ensure that catechists receive assistance in developing their knowledge of the faith and the Gospel message”.



Here in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany our Catholic School Office is responsible for overseeing our diocesan efforts at forming – training – those who will be serving in catechetical ministry in its parishes or schools.

What is Catechist Formation?

Catechist Formation is essentially training of anyone who will be serving the Church in the Albany Diocese as a catechist – one who is sharing the faith with children, teens or adults. New catechists are to receive initial orientation and training before or during their first year in ministry while all catechists are to participate in ongoing training and formation throughout their ministry. The purpose of this training is to help catechists – be they catechists of children, youth ministers, catechists of adults, catechists in intergenerational programs or teachers in our Catholic schools – to faithfully and effectively pass on the faith to others.

Required Courses and Topics

Recognizing that students in different grades would benefit from their teacher using different techniques, tools and resources in teaching the faith, our catechist formation requirements differ based on the age group(s) that you are teaching, and then there are further differences based on where you are teaching – in a Catholic school or at a parish.

		Catechist of Children (lower grades)	Youth Minister (upper grades)
BASIC CERTIFICATION	Common to both tracks/specialties	The Call & Mission of the Catechist & Youth Minister Introduction to Hebrew Scripture Introduction to Christian Scripture Jesus: Who do you say that I am? Introduction to the Creed	
	Track specific	Catechetical Tools & Resources Catechetical Techniques Creative Discipline with Children *	Adolescent Catechesis A Vision of Youth Ministry Adolescent Discipleship *
INTERMEDIATE	Common to both tracks/specialties	Introduction to Morality Intro to the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> Introduction to the RCIA Introduction to the Sacraments	
	Track specific	A Christian Vision of Human Sexuality Church Ecumenism Faith Development Images of God Evangelization Learning Styles * Using the Bible with Different Ages Prayer	Introduction to the Liturgical Year Mary & the Saints Ministry to Persons with Special Needs Social Justice & Service Use of Media & Resources Evangelization & Outreach Adolescent Development * Exploring Scripture with Adolescents Adolescent Spirituality

	Catechist of Children (lower grades)	Youth Minister (upper grades)
	Psychology of the Learner * Worship	Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry I Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry II
ADVANCED	Hebrew Scriptures (4 x 2 hrs) Christian Scriptures (4 x 2 hrs) Christology (4 x 2 hrs) Ecclesiology (4 x 2 hrs) Liturgy & Prayer (4 x 2 hrs) Electives (4 x 2 hrs)	Morality (4 x 2 hrs) Peace & Justice (4 x 2 hrs) Sacraments (4 x 2 hrs) Perspectives on Ministry 1: The Family Confirmation Today Electives (3 x 2 hrs)
	Perspectives ... 2: Multiculturalism Perspectives... 4: Culture & Values Eastern Catholic Churches Spiritual Renewal (4 x 2 hrs)	
	* Professional teachers are typically exempted from these topics/courses.	

Opportunities for Catechist Formation

The Albany Diocese expects that those who are teaching religion would have either completed any four of the basic certification topics for their track before they begin, or during their first year in ministry; the remaining four topics are to be completed by the end of their second year. Thereafter, the expectation is that a catechist, youth minister or Catholic school teacher would complete the equivalent of four, two hour courses towards their diocesan certification each year.

This can be done through a variety of means, including...

- Spring Enrichment
- Fall Certification Retreat
- Kateri Institute for Lay Ministry
- St. Bernard's School of Theology
- Individual or series of classes
- Competency Credit
- Independent Study
- Mentoring

On-Line offerings from

- Echoes of Faith 3.0
- My Catholic Faith Delivered
- Sophia Institute for Teachers
- University of Dayton VLCFF
- Notre Dame STEP
- Boston College

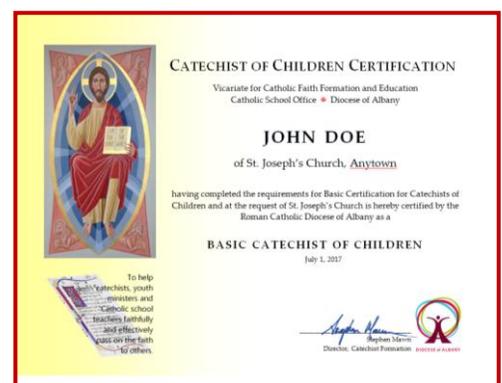
Contact the Diocese's Catechist Formation Office for currently available formation opportunities .

Once you've completed a course, you turn in proof of completion/attendance to your school principal or their designee so that it can be entered in your *Diocesan Certification Transcript* (the official copy of which is maintained by your parish). When you've completed the necessary courses/topics, your school will submit the request to the diocese that you be certified. After reviewing the request the diocese issues the appropriate certification (to your parish to pass along to you) and annually publishes the names of those so certified.

And what does this certification mean?

Diocesan certification...

- Signifies that you have taken the obligation for ministerial and lifelong formation seriously and have made the effort to pursue training to be a faithful and effective teacher of the faith;
- Publicly shows that your parish has taken responsibility for the suitability of its teachers by encouraging their formation and certification, maintaining accurate records and requesting that you be certified when appropriate;
- Is acknowledgement by the Albany Diocese that you have completed the necessary coursework to attain that level of certification; and
- Tells your parish community that it can be confident of your competence in both knowledge and skills to serve in catechetical ministry on its behalf.



For further information please consult with your parish's catechetical/youth ministry leader and/or contact Stephen Mawn, Director of Catechist Formation at the Catholic School Office (Stephen.mawn@rcda.org | 518-453-6602).