



POLICIES

CATECHETICAL CERTIFICATION

DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Elementary Teachers and Catechists

1. All **elementary school** (grades K -8)catechists, regardless of what subject(s) they teach, are required to complete Basic Catechist Certification 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 lead teachers in a Diocesan Early Childhood Center, who teach 4 and 5 year olds, are required to complete Basic Catechist Certification within 2 years of employment. It is strongly recommended that all staff attain Basic certification within a 2 year period of employment.
3. 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 Basic and Standard certification. The Basic certificate should be earned within the first two (2) years of engagement. The Catechist should complete Basic and Standard certification within 5 years of engagement.
4. A Catholic School Teacher who is primarily a middle school religion teacher, defined as teaching three (3) or more classes of religion per day, is obligated to the standards found below in the section marked "High School Teachers and Catechists."
5. 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)
6. 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.com website or listed on the weekly *Echoes*, published by the OCF.
 - Suggest appropriate in-service topics to the school principal.
7. 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.com website or listed on the weekly *Echoes*, published by the OCF.

8. 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.com]
- 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.

9. **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.

10. **Basic Catechist (previously 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. There are pre-reading assignments for each of these classes. Principals and DREs are expected to maintain sets of these and provide them to their staffs in time for them to prepare the readings for the class sessions.

11. **Standard Catechist Certification (formerly Level II)** course information is available through the Office of Christian Formation. 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 Standard certification.

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.com website.

Workshops/Classes for completion of both Levels I and III will be offered by the Office of Christian Formation quarterly.

12. **Continuing Certification (formerly Level III)** is a continuing professional development component to help the catechist maintain his/her current level of certification. Every three (3) years, a catechist, principal, DRE/CRE/Diocesan Formation staff member must submit a record of thirty (30) hours of formation in the Catholic faith. While personal enrichment is important, it is indeed personal. Professional continuing formation increases one's knowledge of the Catholic Faith and gives better skills in imparting that faith and sharing the Gospel more effectively. Suggestions would be: workshops, online classes, Catechism Studies,

approved Bible studies. More suggestions on fulfilling this obligation can be obtained from the Office of Christian Formation or by reading the Echoes newsletter.

13. **Advanced Catechist Certification (formerly 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.
14. **Professional Catechist Certification (formerly 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.
15. **Presenters of ...**
 - **Basic Certification** theology 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).
 - **Standard Certification** 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.
 - **Continuing formation opportunities** should be presented by those who possess the same qualifications as someone who would present Basic or Standard Certification. Exceptions for this should be presented to the Office of Christian Formation for review prior to the catechetical event.

High School Teachers and Catechists (middle school specialists)

All **Catholic High School teachers**, regardless of what subject they teach, must complete Basic Certification within the first two years of employment. After Basic Certification is completed, they go directly to the continuing formation level.

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 complete the Ministry Formation Program of the Diocese of St. Augustine or another comparable Ministry Program approved by the Office of Christian Formation. 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.

OR,

- Must have at least 12 hours of graduate credits 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 subject areas for ae to be approved through the Office of Christian Formation to match the area (s) that the person will be asked to teach. 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;

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).

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.

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