

Diocesan Certification

Diocesan Certification is awarded to persons completing course requirements in the particular areas of competence for preschool catechesis and special religious education. Diocesan certification is issued for three years and is renewable by attendance at thirty hours of course work or workshops. Diocesan specialization courses do not qualify a person for California Catechist Certification, but automatically renew California Catechist Certification and may be applied for Advanced Catechist Certification for the person who already holds California Catechist Certification.

Preschool Certification

The Diocesan Preschool Certification Course is designed to equip beginning catechists with sufficient background and skill to begin teaching at the preschool level. The fifteen-hour course is taught by a team of qualified preschool catechists. The cost of the Preschool Course is \$40.00 and includes the Preschool Manual and materials.

Special Religious Education Certification

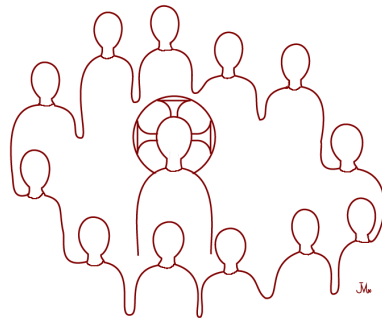
The Special Religious Education Certification Course provides catechetical formation for catechists of persons of any age with mild to severe learning and/or physical disabilities. Certification is granted upon completion of nine clock hours of Special Religious Education coursework and six clock hours of diocesan sponsored workshops and/or conferences. The cost of the Special Religious Education course is \$30.00 and includes materials.

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Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry

Catechist Formation and Certification



*Jesus Christ is at once
the message,
the messenger,
the purpose of the message, and
the consummation of the message.*

(NDC, p. 4)

Catechist Formation

The Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry views catechist formation at every level—preschool through adult—as one of its primary goals and provides programs of certification and renewal to meet that end.

In accord with the California Catholic Conference of Bishops and the policies for educational ministry in the Diocese of San Diego, every catechist should hold current catechist certification or be in the process of obtaining certification.

According to diocesan policy, catechists may be certified in one of three ways:

1. By completing the Basic Catechist Formation Course;
2. By completing the catechist certification courses in the San Diego Diocesan Institute;
3. By completing those requirements identified by the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry through evaluation of an individual profile obtained from the Office.

Selection and Formation of Catechists

The *Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate or California Master Catechist Certificate* state that it is the responsibility of pastors and catechetical leadership to:

- ✦ Call forth and screen candidates and evaluate their potential to become faith-filled and dynamic catechists;
- ✦ Require candidates to complete formation programs for catechist certification;
- ✦ Select, orient, commission, supervise and annually evaluate catechists;
- ✦ Provide catechists with opportunities for continued personal, spiritual and professional development.

Qualities of the Catechist

Prospective catechists should reflect the following qualities:

- ✦ A strong awareness of God's presence and a growing faith in response to that grace;
- ✦ A personal commitment to Jesus Christ;
- ✦ A strong sense of Church evidenced by the awareness of the importance of building Christian community, and commitment to teaching in the Roman Catholic tradition according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*;
- ✦ A deepening prayer life, participation in liturgy and dedication to service;
- ✦ A respect for individual growth and differences;
- ✦ An openness to change and deep Christian conviction;
- ✦ An ability to communicate effectively;
- ✦ A willingness to continue one's own formation.



All catechists should be “practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the Church.” (NDC, p. 228)

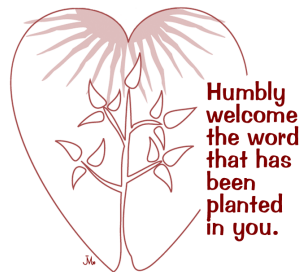
California Catechist Certification

Basic Catechist Formation Course

The Basic Catechist Formation Course, recently revised in light of the *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)*, is a 48-hour course offered at centers throughout the diocese. The course, which incorporates the six tasks of catechesis and uses various methodologies suggested in the *Directory*, is offered for all catechists—preschool through adult. It is designed to provide beginning parish or school catechists, or those needing renewal in catechetics, with a knowledge of the Catholic faith and Christian living as well as the skills and techniques which are necessary to hand on the faith, encourage a deeper relationship with Christ and promote discipleship and evangelization.

Upon successful completion of the course, which is in compliance with the *Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate* issued by the California Catholic Conference, catechists receive California Catechist Certification.

There are no academic pre-requisites for taking the Basic Catechist Formation Courses sponsored by the Diocese.



Goals of the Course

- ✦ To develop or deepen a sense of vocation to serve as a catechist and to explore the qualities needed to respond to the call.
- ✦ To develop basic knowledge, skills and abilities needed to communicate the Gospel message effectively.
- ✦ To understand basic Catholic doctrine as defined by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
- ✦ To understand and implement the tasks of catechesis as described in the *NDC*.
- ✦ To experience Christian community through prayer, liturgical experiences, witnessing and group learning situations.
- ✦ To encourage ongoing study, growth, conversion and renewal.
- ✦ To stimulate an evangelizing spirit and enthusiastic discipleship.

Instructors

The Basic Catechist Formation Course is taught by a team of qualified instructors called Master Catechists. All Master Catechists are approved by the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry and complete a diocesan training program.

Course Centers/Costs

The Basic Catechist Formation Course is offered at various centers throughout the Diocese. The cost of the course is \$60.00 and includes handouts, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the use of resource materials. The current listing of courses can be found at www.diocese-sdiego.org/evangelization.htm

Diocesan Institute

The San Diego Diocesan Institute offers courses to provide foundational theology for persons interested in ministry. Most courses can be used toward obtaining diocesan ministry certificates and for renewal of catechist certification.

California Catechist Certification may be achieved through satisfactory completion of three fifteen-hour Diocesan Institute courses as follows:

1. C110 – Catechism of the Catholic Church;
2. S120 – Catechetics;
3. S100 – Faith Growth: Childhood and Early Adolescence, or S105 – Faith Growth: Adults

For further information and course descriptions regarding the San Diego Diocesan Institute Courses, please call the Institute Office at (858) 490-8212.

Waiving Course Requirements

Catechists who hold certification from another Diocese or who have a strong background in Theology and Catechetics may have the requirement for course work waived by submitting a profile which is available from the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry. The Director will review the profile and issue certification, or advise the catechist of coursework needed for certification.

Advanced Certification

Advanced Catechist Certification is offered as an opportunity for catechists who wish to progress in their formation in a systematic fashion. It is not a requirement that catechists work toward Advanced Catechist Certification. The certificate, issued for three years, will supersede the Basic Catechist Certificate and may be renewed by 30 clock hours of renewal work.

The requirements for Advanced Catechist Certification are as follows:

1. Current California Catechist Certification;
2. Three to five years experience as a catechist;
3. Sixty clock hours of coursework in the San Diego Diocesan Institute, parish courses or video courses offered at the parish level, or equivalent course work as evaluated by the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry;
4. Letter of recommendation from DCM or Coordinator.

Renewal

Certification of the fully certified California, Diocesan, or Advanced catechist expires three years from the date of issue. Certification is renewed in one of the following ways:

- ✦ Completing thirty clock hours in Diocesan sponsored or approved conferences, workshops, or congresses that are designated for renewal credit;
- ✦ Completing thirty hours of course work in the San Diego Diocesan Institute;
- ✦ Completing an approved course in Religious Studies or Religious Education at a Catholic college or university;
- ✦ Completing a specialization in a given area, such as Preschool, Special Religious Education, RCIA, or Catechetical Methods.