

Catechist Formation

Diocese of Buffalo For Catechists in Parishes

I. Catechist Formation Policy for Catechists in Parishes:

The Diocese of Buffalo requires all those who have been called to be a catechist be properly formed in the faith and participate in on-going catechist formation according to the standards articulated by the Department of Lifelong Faith Formation. Catechists who have been entrusted with handing on the faith and supporting the catechetical and evangelizing mission of the parish must participate. The policy is as follows:

- Consistent with the previous Catechist Certification directives, the Diocese of Buffalo has always required catechists to be working toward catechist certification, and, once complete, to participate in 5 hours of on-going formation annually. Effective with the 2010-2011 year, we have suspended the Level 1, 2, and 3 designations in favor of supporting catechist formation standards that focus solely on each catechist completing 5 hours of formation annually.
- All catechists & catechetical leaders will complete 5 hours of Catholic formation/theological education annually aligned with the required standards of the diocesan Catechist Formation Process. A certificate will be issued once a record is received verifying completion.
- The Department of Lifelong Faith Formation recommends use of multiple formats that honor the unique learning styles of adults. Adult catechists are encouraged to participate in parish faith sharing experiences, retreats, continuing education or for-credit courses, workshops, on-line programs or video-assisted programming. Catechetical leaders are still highly encouraged to organize on-site training programs while at the same time supporting independent learning as well.
- Each catechist should maintain their own catechist formation record and submit it to the parish catechetical leader (DRE) annually as requested which should be kept in their personnel file. The parish catechetical leader will forward the Parish Catechist Formation Record Form provided by the Department of Lifelong Faith Formation to the department on an annual basis.
- Parishes will receive regular updates announcing opportunities available to catechists to support their formation. In addition, parishes are encouraged to partner with nearby parishes to offer adult formation programs that will assist their catechists in fulfilling this requirement. The Department of Lifelong Faith Formation will facilitate access to formation opportunities for catechists via distribution of information, organizing on-site programming, and oversight of accountability.

Revised Fall 2010 mbc

II. Implementation Strategies:

- A. Self-directed/ Independent Learners: Consult various websites, Christ the King Seminary, and local churches for relevant opportunities for formation. There are many more options!
1. *Echoes of Faith Plus* and Workbook (DVD or Video)
 2. Continuing Education Courses at Christ the King Seminary (www.cks.edu)
 3. On-line courses from places such as: Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, (www.c2lon-line@bc.edu) or, Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (www.PNCEA.org)
 4. Local parish opportunities: guest speakers, parish mission, Bible study, etc.
- B. In-service/ Faculty Staff Days by parish, school or region: The sky is the limit!
1. *Echoes of Faith Plus* and Workbook (DVD or Video)
 2. Guest Speakers (contact Lifelong Faith Formation for recommendations)
 3. *Catechist Magazine* with related discussions throughout the year
 4. Service Days
 5. Host vicariate grade-level sharing days
- C. Miscellaneous Sources:
1. National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). *Echoes of Faith Catechist Formation: Director's Manual*. Texas: RCL-Benziger, 1999. www.RCLBenziger.com (1-877-275-4725) This short 40 page resource succinctly explains: The Importance of Catechist Formation; What is *Echoes of Faith*; Using *Echoes of Faith*.
 2. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops www.usccb.org (Including *To Teach* e-magazine)
 3. Loyola Press www.loyolapress.com 3 minute Retreat
 4. Harcourt Religion Publishers <http://yourharcourtreligion.com>
 5. Sadlier Publisher www.sadlier.com
 6. Faith First www.faithfirst.com
 7. 23RD Publications www.pastoralplanning.com
 8. Vatican www.Vatican.va
 9. Lifelong Faith Formation www.officeoflifelongfaithformation.org
 10. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechists.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

III. Content Topic & Outlines:

1. Orientation/ Intro to Theology* (Suggested 2- 3 hours)
(*This section is required for first year catechists.)
2. Faith Development (Suggested 3 hours)
3. Prayer & Spirituality (Suggested 3 hours)
4. Liturgy, Sacraments, RCIA (Suggested 3 hours)
5. Catholic Morality (Suggested 3 hours)
6. Sacred Scripture (Suggested 3 hours)
7. Christology (Jesus) (Suggested 3 hours)
8. Creed & Church (Ecclesiology) (Suggested 3 hours)
9. Vatican II & Social Justice (Suggested 3 hours)

Resource: National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). [Echoes of Faith Catechist Formation: Director's Manual](#). Texas: RCL-Benziger, 1999. www.RCLBenziger.com (1-877-275-4725)

This short 40 page resource succinctly explains:

- The Importance of Catechist Formation;
- What is *Echoes of Faith*;
- Using *Echoes of Faith*.

1. Orientation & Introduction to Theology

(Required for 1st year teachers of religion)

(Suggested 2- 3 hours)

Catechesis is centered in the mystery of Christ; true God and true Man, and in His incarnation, life, death and resurrection. This task is carried out under the guidance of the Magisterium of the church.

(National Directory for Catechesis 47)

Orientation

The expectations, local procedures, and age-appropriate teaching methods are to be covered by the catechetical leader prior to the new catechist beginning their ministry in the parish.

A. Suggested Resources: National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus: (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2007, The Person of the Catechist The Roles of the Catechist And Getting Started as a Catechist and Methods Grades 1 & 2, Methods Grades 3 & 4, Methods Grades 5 & 6 and Methods Grades 7 & 8.

Introduction to Theology

A. Learning Goal: To understand major themes of the Roman Catholic faith & grow in one's understanding of their role as a catechist.

B. Learning Objective:

- a. Scripture
 - To discover what the Bible is and its make up
- b. Liturgy & Spirituality
 - To learn what prayer is and how to lead students in prayer
- c. Sacraments
 - To understand the roles of grace, symbols and RCIA
- d. Mary & the Saints
 - To explore the roles Mary and the Saints have in the church
- e. Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - To appreciate its purpose and key teachings

C. Resources:

- a. Handbook For Today's Catholic. Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994.
- b. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Chapter 4 Divine and Human Methodology, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.
- c. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition (CCC). USCCB, Washington, DC, 1997. **Scripture-** In Brief pages 37-38; **Grace-** In Brief pages 489-490; **Baptism-** In Brief pages 324-325; **Confirmation-** In Brief pages 332-333; **Eucharist-** In Brief pages 355-356; **Penance & Reconciliation-** In Brief pages 373-374; **Anointing of the Sick-** In Brief page 382; **Holy Orders-** In Brief pages 398-399; **Matrimony-** In Brief pages 414-415; **Mary-** In Brief page 254.
- d. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

2. Faith Development

(Suggested 3 hours)

God reveals Himself to us gradually and in stages, drawing us ever closer in order to prepare us to welcome the culmination of God's self-revelation in ... Jesus Christ.

(National Directory for Catechesis 16A)

A. Definition: Vatican Council II defined faith as an action of the entire person in relationship with God. Faith is always in process. Just as our bodies, minds, and personalities change and develop, so the spiritual dimension of our lives must also mature. Faith has many more aspects:

- belief in God
- moral response
- penitence
- obedience
- trust in God's care
- a sense of election
- perseverance

B. Learning Goal: To introduce the continuous cycle of growth and development of faith that occurs throughout life.

C. Learning Objective:

- a. To appreciate that understanding facts and concepts is related to stages of faith development.
- b. To appreciate the ways in which cognitive, psycho-social, and moral development influence faith development.

D. Resources:

- a. National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- The Learner. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2007.
- b. Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Catholic Life & Practice, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
- c. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition (CCC). Part One, Section One, Chapter Three, III. The Characteristics of Faith, numbers 153-184, USCCB, Washington, DC, 1997.
- d. Westerhoff III, John H. Will Our Children Have Faith. New York: Seabury Press, 1976.
- e. Fowler, James W. Stages of Faith. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
- f. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

3. Prayer & Spirituality

(Suggested 3 hour)

The life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the Trinity God and in Communion with God.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2565)

A. Definition:

a. “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” St. John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3,24: PG 94, 1089C.

We come to prayer just as we are, with our hopes, fears, joys, and doubts. God speaks and invites us to respond with a “Yes” to God’s offer of love.

b. Spirituality is gaining insight, knowledge and a better understanding about life.

B. Learning Goal: To appreciate the rhythm of prayer & spirituality as listening and responding to God’s call.

C. Learning Objectives:

a. To gain a deeper understanding of the styles of prayer and why we pray.

b. To appreciate the Eucharist as the prayer of the church community.

c. To gain a better understanding of key aspects of Christian spiritual life.

d. To explore the richness of the Our Father as expressing the heart of the Gospel.

D. Resources:

a. National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- Prayer & Spirituality. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2009.

b. Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Spirituality, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.

c. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). 34. Liturgical and Personal Prayer, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.

d. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition (CCC). Part Four: Christian Prayer, pages 613-687, USCCB, Washington, DC, 1997.

e. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

4. Liturgy, Sacraments, RCIA

(Suggested 3 hours)

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows.

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) 10)

A. Definition:

- a. Liturgy is the name we give to religious rituals such as the Mass and sacraments that we celebrate as a Church community. They are our acts of public worship.
- b. “Sacraments are efficacious signs of God’s love and stages of a person’s journey toward communion with the Trinity.” (NDC p. 118)
- c. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults- the process by which persons gradually become members of the Roman Catholic Church.

B. Learning Goal: To explore the nature and use of ritual, symbols, and symbolic actions in the Church’s celebration of the Paschal mystery

C. Learning Objectives:

- a. To explore how worship expresses our identity as a faith community
- b. To learn and understand how to plan a liturgy.
- c. To explore the three Sacraments of Initiation and how they relate to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).
- d. To explain the two Sacraments of Healing in the ongoing life of the church.
- e. To describe the two Sacraments of Service as a part of Jesus’ ministry.
- f. To appreciate the centrality of Eucharist in the Christian Life

D. Resources:

- a. National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- Liturgy & Sacraments. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2009.
- b. Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Sacraments & Liturgy, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
- c. Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons, and Weekdays: The Almanac for Pastoral Liturgy Liturgy Training Publications (LTP). 2010.
- d. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Chapter 5, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.
- e. www.buffalodiocese.org/Education/Catechumenate
- f. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

5. Catholic Morality

(Suggested 3 hours)

The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his/her sensory and spiritual powers; he/she pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 1803)

- A. Definition:** Morality is the task of distinguishing between good and evil and applying these distinctions to human behavior.
- Two underlying moral principals are the dignity of each human person as a child of God and the vocation to live in friendship with God and one another.
 - Good is whatever supports human dignity and fosters our relationship with God and community.
 - Evil is whatever weakens or destroys God and community.
- B. Learning Goal:** To acquire a deeper understanding of the meaning and foundations of Christian morality and virtues.
- C. Learning Objective:**
- To establish criteria for determining the morality or immorality of a human action.
 - To understand conscience formation and moral decision making.
 - To review the Ten Commandments and the Two Laws of Love and to understand their relationship.
- D. Resources:**
- National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus-Catholic Morality. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2009.
 - Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Morality, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Pages 163-184, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.
 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition (CCC). USCCB, Washington, DC, 1997. **First Commandment** - In Brief page 517; **Second Commandment**- In Brief page 522; **Third Commandment**- In Brief page 529; **Fourth Commandment**- In Brief page 543; **Fifth Commandment**- In Brief page 558; **Sixth Commandment**- In Brief page 575; **Seventh Commandment**- In Brief page 589; **Eighth Commandment**- In Brief page 600; **Ninth Commandment**- In Brief page 605; **Tenth Commandment**- In Brief page 611.
 - Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

6. Sacred Scripture

(Suggested 3 hours)

Those who search out the intention of the sacred writers must, among other things, have regard for 'literary forms.'

For truth is proposed and expressed in a variety of ways...

(Dei Verbum 12)

- A. Definition:** The word of God written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and expressed in human language. Whenever and wherever we encounter the words of Scripture, we come in contact with God's self-disclosure.
- B. Learning Goal:** To understand what the Bible is, how it was formed and the variety of writings it contains.
- C. Learning Objectives:**
- To understand the Bible is a religious interpretation of history, inspiration and Biblical truth because it reveals the truth about God.
 - To appreciate the whole story of Sacred Scripture that reveals the free gift of God's constant and saving love.
 - To understand the New Testament reveals Jesus as the fulfillment of the story of salvation, through the four Gospels.
 - To describe ways Christians continue the work of the early Church, sharing the message of Jesus and build the Reign of God.
- E. Resources:**
- National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- The Scriptures. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2009.
 - Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Scripture, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
 - Channing Bete Company. The Bible and You . Massachusetts: Channing, 2000.
 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Chapter 3, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.
 - Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

7. Christology (Jesus)

(Suggested 3 hours)

***In Christ the whole of God's eternal plan is revealed,
a plan that begins with the Father's generation of
His only Son and reaches its fulfillment in Him.***

(National Directory for Catechesis 19B)

- A. Definition:** Jesus is both the beginning (the Alpha) and the end (the Omega) of the story of Salvation. It was only in the light of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances that His followers began to realize who He actually was and all that had been accomplished.
- B. Learning Goal:** To explain how the Old Testament themes of covenant and freedom are realized in the saving action (Paschal Mystery) of Jesus
- C. Learning Objective:**
- To express the significance of the Reign of God
 - To focus on the ministry of Jesus
 - To be aware of His parables, miracles and teachings
 - To understand Jesus calls all people to conversion- a lifelong process
- D. Resources:**
- National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- The Scriptures. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2007.
 - Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Jesus and Discipleship, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Chapter 6, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.
 - Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

8. Creed & Church (Ecclesiology)

Suggested 3 hours

From the beginning, God has made known the inexhaustible mystery of His love in order to give us a share in His own divine life.

(National Directory for Catechesis 16A)

- A. Definition:** The Creed contains central truths, dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Church.
The Church is God's presence on earth bringing His Reign through His people.
- B. Learning Goal:** To understand the central beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. To reflect on the ways God is revealed to us and the response He calls us to make in faith.
- C. Learning Objectives:**
- a. To articulate the meaning of the incarnation of Jesus
 - b. To describe the church's understanding of the Paschal Mystery
 - c. To appreciate the evolution of the Creed and the Church in which it developed.
 - d. To know the four marks of the Catholic Church
 - e. To understand the role the community of faith plays in the Catholic Church
- D. Resources:**
- a. National Conference of Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). Echoes of Faith Plus- I Believe, We Believe. (DVD or Video) Texas: RCL-Benziger, 2007.
 - b. Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Catholic Life & Practice, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.
 - c. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Catechism of the Catholic Church Second Edition (CCC). Part One: The Profession of Faith, USCCB, Washington, DC, 1997.
 - d. Lighthouse Catholic Media www.catechistcds.com then click on Diocese of Buffalo, NY on the left hand side.

9. Vatican II & Social Justice

Suggested 3 hours

Pope John XXIII threw open the windows of the Church and light burst into the chambers ...to bring herself up-to-date where required.

(Bill Huebsch, Vatican II In Plain English: The Council p. 75)

Vatican II

A. Definition: Reaffirmed the Church's mission to lead people to God, heal human anxieties, uphold dignity, and bear witness as a community united through the bond of love.

B. Learning Goal: to understand the purpose & history of church councils, especially Vatican II.

C. Learning Objectives:

a. To understand the mission of the Church to evangelize the entire world.

D. Resources:

a. The Faithful Revolution: Vatican II 5 Videos. (60 minutes each) Vatican II Productions, 1996. (Available from Diocesan library, 847-8778)

b. Huebsch, Bill. Vatican II in Plain English: The Constitutions. "A Brief Summary of the Documents of Vatican II" Pages 195-208, Texas: Thomas More, 1997.

Social Justice

A. Definition: Builds on the dignity and worth of every human being, social justice affirms everyone's needs in society must be provided for, especially the needs of the marginalized.

B. Learning Goal: To identify the seven principles of Catholic Social teachings and ways to integrate these principals across the curriculum.

C. Learning Objective:

a. To differentiate between charity and justice

b. To understand the 7 principals of Catholic social teaching as constitutive elements of the Gospel

c. To understand that each Catholic has a responsibility for social action according to his/her circumstance.

D. Resources:

a. Zanzig, Tom, and Shirley Kelter. Adult Faith Formation Strategies. (DVD included) Chapter titled: Peace and Social Justice, Wisconsin: Metanoia Resources, 2006.

b. In the Footsteps of Jesus. Video. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Washington, D.C.2003. (28 minutes) (Contact: Diocesan library 847-8778)

c. www.usccb.org and www.crs.org

d. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). National Directory for Catechesis (NDC). Pages 170-171, USCCB, Washington, D.C. 2005.

e. Local Catholic Charities agencies are also a good resource to raise awareness (www.ccwny.org)