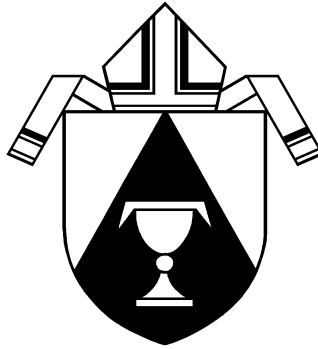


Catholic Diocese of Sacramento

2023



Certification Guidelines for Catechists & Ministers (Basic)

Office of Family and Faith Formation

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Recognizing the importance of education and formation for persons actively participating in the catechetical ministry of the Church, the bishops of California have called catechists to participate in a basic level of formation to prepare them adequately for beginning their ministry. In addition, the bishops call those who are serving in this ministry to continue this formation throughout their years of service. To help persons identify what is necessary, the California Catholic Conference has set guidelines for basic catechist certification and renewal of certification.

The Diocese of Sacramento is committed to providing quality education and formation leading to the certification of catechists, in accordance with the Guidelines for Obtaining the California Catechist Certificate (1996) and the 2009 updated Guidelines which reflect new catechetical documents published since 1996.

Requirements for Certification in the Diocese of Sacramento

A. Course of studies to obtain a Basic Catechist Certificate

The course of studies is consistent with the *General Directory for Catechesis, National Catechetical Directory* and carefully follows the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Introduction to the Catholic Faith: Catechetical Foundations Course

The course is comprised of eight units, each consisting of four or more topics. The course is designed to cover two units per month, with new topics introduced each week.

Participants in the course will be enrolled into an online learning platform. There will be an assigned Master Catechist Mentor to follow along with the participants and assist with questions. Each week participants will work through parts and take no longer than 2 hours per week as well as monthly live meetings via zoom or in person.

Prayer Practice – Introduction to different prayers, prayer styles, and an opportunity to use the material in their own spiritual life.

Unit Objectives – Varies on unit. The first week of each unit will include an overview of the materials and then an assigned reading/video or both.

Methodology – This area will focus on elements they have learned applied. There may be vignettes, short readings, etc.

Assignment/Assessment – Questions/prompts will be available for discussion on the online discussion board. Participants will be able to interact with each other as well as their cohort mentor.

B. Spiritual Development of the Catechist/Minister

The Spiritual Development Component is completed through participation in at least two of the following activities:

- Full-Day or Weekend Retreat
- Ministry Days or another Region XI Diocesan Conference
- Full-Day Justice/Service Project
- Ongoing Spiritual Direction
- Ongoing Faith Sharing Group

All retreats/spiritual direction/faith-sharing groups must be Catholic in nature. Other activities may be submitted for approval to the Office of Family and Faith Formation.

C. Observation (Not required for the Basic Minister Certificate)

A formal observation of the candidate teaching at least one catechetical session is required to fulfill the certification requirements. The observation form needs to be filled out by either the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education or the Pastor.

Application procedures

After completion of the course of studies (A) spiritual development activities (B), and after evaluation of performance (C), the candidate will need to complete the application form - including signatures of candidate, Director of Religious Education and Pastor - and send it to the diocesan offices for approval. The certificate will be issued to the Director of Religious Education. It is the responsibility of the candidate to work on and document progress on Basic Certification and Renewal of Certification: record classes, workshops, and retreats that they have attended by indicating the date, the instructor and the specified number of hours that were approved for the workshop. Copies of these records need to be attached to the application form.

Classes and Online Option:

The basic catechist certification coursework requirement may be fulfilled by the following circumstances or courses/programs that are approved by the Diocese of Sacramento:

1. The person has received a degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry and has evidence of ongoing enrichment in the field.

Parishes and individuals may request that coursework other than that listed above be reviewed for approval for Basic Certification credit. Please contact Lauralyn Solano at 916-733-0153 / lsolano@scd.org for additional information on this review process.

Expiration and Renewal of Catechist Certification:

Certification expires at the end of four years from the date of issue. Renewal of Certification should be done every four years. The purpose of Renewal of Certification is to encourage Catechists to avail themselves of the opportunity for ongoing faith formation. The Sacramento Diocese calls for 40 hours of ongoing formation in the following areas over 4 years:

1. For first renewal the required course is Building Intercultural Competencies for Ministers.
2. At least 10 hours in Spiritual Development
3. At least 20 hours in Other Topics

Please note that Renewal Hours may be obtained by attending the Diocesan Ministry Days held in the Diocese of Sacramento as well as other catechetical conferences and local workshops that have been approved for credits by the Diocese of Sacramento. Ministry Days provides 5 Renewal Hours in the category of "Other Topics."

Parish DRE's or other catechetical leaders who are sponsoring a parish workshop or other events for which credit toward Basic Certification or Renewal of Certification is desired, should fill out and submit the workshop approval request form and send it to the Office of Family and Faith Formation at least one month prior to the event and before any promotional material is printed. Staff members within the Office of Family and Faith Formation will evaluate whether and how much credit should be awarded toward Basic certification or Renewal of certification.

Renewal credits can also be obtained by taking online courses indicated by the Diocese of Sacramento recommendations.

Lapsed Certificates

Certificates that have lapsed for a period of 4 years are unable to be renewed. An individual holding a certificate with an expiration date of greater than 4 years needs to take the coursework for Basic Certification and follow the process for Initial Certification.

Individuals holding a certificate that has an expiration date within 4 years of the date of application for Renewal will be granted renewal of their certificate, provided the aforementioned ongoing formation is completed.

A grace period for 2019-2022 will be in effect. Individuals holding certificates that expire prior to 2019 will be asked to take Catechetical Foundations.