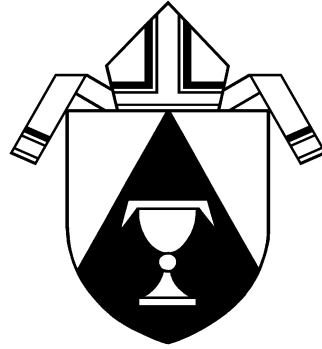


Catholic Diocese of Sacramento

2023



Certification Guidelines for Catholic School Teachers (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

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

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 the Principal/DRE/Master Catechist.

Application procedures

After completion of the course of studies (A), spiritual development activities (B), and evaluation of performance (C), the candidate completes the application form – obtaining the signatures of the candidate, Principal and Pastor (if Roman Catholic) - and sends it to the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis for approval. The certificate is issued to the principal. It is the responsibility of the candidate to work on and document progress on Basic Certification.

Special provisions

For teachers who do not teach religion and for non-Catholic teachers, a formal observation of a faith filled session is required that demonstrates Christ like attitudes and reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church. Non-Catholic teachers are required to comply with all the formation requirements listed in this document and will receive a Basic Certificate in Catholic Doctrine after successful completion of the formation process.

Who must be certified?

Certification is encouraged for all Faculty and Staff within our Catholic Schools. Certification is required for the following:

- All Principals, Vice-Principals, Preschool Directors and Extension Directors
- All Grade-Level Religion Teachers (Regardless of number of hours employed)
- All Teachers who are under contract (20 hours or more, exempt or non-exempt, diocesan-wide)

When must Certification be Completed?

New teachers or teachers whose status changes to require certification must complete the coursework required for Basic Catechist Certification (Basic Certificate in Catholic Doctrine) within the first contract year, starting with the 2022-2023 school year

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.
2. Catechetical Foundations course offered by the Diocese of Sacramento every January, May, and September.

Schools 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. To facilitate the renewal process, Catholic School Teachers are offered the opportunity to complete their renewal through regularly scheduled activities at their respective schools. Renewal coursework for Catholic School Teachers, therefore, is completed through designated formation offered during Faculty Meetings, Faculty Retreats and Ministry Days.

Each year teachers are offered 10 hours of formation through attendance at Faculty Staff Meetings. Over the course of three years, teachers will complete coursework in a pre-planned curriculum and an elective topic. In addition, teachers are expected to attend the annual Faculty Retreat offered at their school and the annual Ministry Days conference each of the three years.

Principals are responsible for completing annual paperwork and submitting it to the Catholic Schools Department regarding the curriculum completed during their Faculty Meetings and their Faculty Retreat. This will include a list of the faculty members who completed the course of study/attended the retreat.

After completing 3 years of this Renewal Program, teachers complete a "Request for Renewal of Basic Catechist Certificate" and submit their application to the Office of Family and Faith Formation. The "Request for Renewal of Basic Catechist Certificate" asks the teacher to list the principal and school where each year's curriculum was completed. Requests are reviewed and issued certificates are sent to the Principal.