



DIOCESE OF
SACRAMENTO+

LAY LEADERSHIP FORMATION PLAN

2026-2029

Basic Formation

Intermediate Course Series Level 1-
Ministry Program

Intermediate Course Series Level 2-
Theology Program

Advanced Studies & Masters



Bishop Jaime Soto's strategic plan for the Diocese of Sacramento prioritizes reinvigorating the formation of the laity. This means providing formations and certifications for catechists and ministry leaders with deep spiritual, theological, and practical training needed to live out their faith and mission in the Church and in the secular world. Through supporting their formation, we ensure our parishes are led by confident, compassionate, and well-equipped and formed lay leaders. As a well-formed people of God, we can bring the light of Christ to a world that so deeply needs it.

The Diocese of Sacramento's Department of Lay Formation is happy to present to you the Lay Leadership Program. The program's goal is to ensure our catechist and ministry leaders have the theological knowledge, spiritual and human maturity, pedagogy and skills required to faithfully pass on Catholic teachings, helping them move from presenting information to being witnesses and share a lived relationship with Christ in a safe and engaging learning environment for students of all ages.

In the Diocese of Sacramento, we offer the following Certifications:

1. Basic Catechist Certification
2. Ministry Certification
3. Master Catechist Certificate and Advanced Studies Certificate

Process for certifications:

1. Fulfilled required formation for that level
2. Spiritual Development
3. Observation (for Catechist only)
4. Recommendation by the Pastor
5. Safe Environment Clearance
6. Participant will need to submit an application

These courses were designed to model the guidelines set forth by the California Catholic Conference (CCC) of Bishops.



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BASIC FORMATION

CATECHETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Catechetical Foundations is the basic course study for anyone in the Diocese of Sacramento who wishes to understand the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and how to pass it on to others. In particular, it is for parish leaders, catechists, teachers, homeschooling parents, and those involved in pastoral and liturgical ministries.

It is an eight-unit course that combines independent study with a cohort meeting component. It is designed to be completed over 8 months. Each month includes 1-2 hours of independent study plus a 2-3-hour in-person gathering.

Course Content

Unit 1: Who is Called to Beatitude?

Unit 2: How are we Called to Beatitude?

Unit 3: Called to Discipleship (Discipleship in General)

Unit 4: Called to the Spiritual Life (Discipleship in Particular ways)

Unit 5: Called to Virtue (to Love as Christ Loves)

Unit 6: Called to build up a Virtuous Society (Catholic Social Teaching)

Unit 7: Called to Continual Conversion - The Heart of the New
Evangelization

Unit 8: Called to Build up the Kingdom of God

At the completion of the course, participants are able to use this formation toward Basic Certification with the Diocese of Sacramento. This formation is designed to ensure catechists are fit for the mission: not only to impart knowledge of the faith, but to make disciples of Jesus Christ.



In addition to the Catechetical Foundations from the Diocese of Sacramento, we offer this formation opportunity:

The 4 Pillars of the Catholic Catechism

Two hours weekly, for two months

1. The Profession of Faith (What Catholics Believe)
2. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Sacraments & Liturgy)
3. Life in Christ (Moral Life & Commandments)
4. Christian Prayer

Completion of the Basic formation of the 4 Pillars of the Catholic Catechism and a course of ICS Level 1- Ministry program satisfies the required formation to be able to receive the Basic Certificate.



INTERMEDIATE COURSE SERIES

Intermediate Course Series (ICS)* is designed for those seeking to deepen their understanding of their vocation and identity as Catechists and Ministry Leaders. This ICS also provides advanced preparation for those pursuing certification as Master Catechists or Advanced Studies in Ministry.

Intermediate Course Series refers to two levels: ICS Level 1 and ICS Level 2.

Intermediate Course Series

Level 1

ICS Level 1 focuses on Ministry Program such as Liturgy, Catechesis, Pastoral Ministry, Social Concerns, Marriage and Family, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and Scripture.

ICS Level 2 focuses on Theology Program such as Revelation and Transmission, Christology, Ecclesiology, Fundamental Moral, The Holy Trinity and the Sacred Scripture.

Intermediate Course Series Level 1 is a ministerial program

Requirement: Basic Formation

Alternative requirement: Completing the Four Pillars of the Catholic Catechism and a course of the ICS Level 1 prepares you for your Basic Certification.

A Diocesan Certificate of Completion will be given to the student at the end of each series of ICS Level 1.

** In 2022, what was called before Specialization Series was started to be called Liturgy series, Social Concerns series, etc. taking away the term "Specialization". From this year 2026 onward, we consider to call this Series "Intermediate Course Series (ICS)."*

2026

Level 1

PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT

This aims at nurturing, equipping and strengthening the commitment and co-responsibility of lay committed people to walk alongside others spiritually.

February 7, 2026

What is Pastoral Accompaniment?
Biblical foundation in OT and NT

March 28, 2026

Model of Pastoral Accompaniment:
Jesus' life and teaching as the model for accompaniment

May 2, 2026

Pedagogy of Pastoral accompaniment.
How to walk with the people?

May 30, 2026

Developing deep spiritual life is essential
for pastoral accompaniment

June 20, 2026

Lectio Divino- nourished by and rooted in
the Word of God

July 18, 2026

Participation in the 3 offices: prophet
(teacher), priest (sanctifier) and king
(ruler) to meet the spiritual needs of the
people

August 1, 2026

Pastoral accompaniment aims at the
transformation in the Person of Christ
and faithful following of Christ

CATECHESIS

This series aims at deepening and invigorating the identity and mission of a catechist

February 7, 2026

Catechesis & Evangelization/ Vocation
and Formation of Catechist

March 28, 2026

Process of Catechesis: Pedagogy of Faith/
The Catechism of the Catholic Church I

May 2, 2026

Process of Catechesis: The Catechism of
the Catholic Church II

May 30, 2026

Catechesis in the lives of the person

June 20, 2026

Catechesis in the Christian community

July 18, 2026

Catechesis in Contemporary Cultural
Scenarios/ Inculturation of Faith

August 1, 2026

Those in the Church who serve
Catechesis

2026-2027

Level 1

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

This series aims at helping the students to acquire a deep appreciation of the beauty of marriage and the vital significance of family in one's life, and the importance of a Christ-centered approach to relationships.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRED SCRIPTURE

This series aims at providing foundation for Christian life by discovering through the Bible the understandable story of God's enduring and redemptive relationship with humanity, culminating in Christ, through the stories of Israel, its laws, and its prophets.

October 3, 2026

The precious value of Marriage and of the Family

October 3, 2026

General introduction. Canon of the Bible and Inspiration

November 7, 2026

The plan of God for Marriage and Family

November 7, 2026

History & Geography: From Land to Text, Ancient Setting, Oral and Written Stages

January 9, 2027

Biblical vision of Marriage and Family in the Old Testament

January 9, 2027

The Books of the Old Testament

February 6, 2027

Biblical vision of Marriage and Family in the New Testament

February 6, 2027

The 4 Gospels

March 6, 2027

Marriage and Family in the world today: the Socio-cultural, the religious context, anthropological change and cultural contradictions

March 6, 2027

Acts of the Apostles

April 3, 2027

Conflicts and social tensions/ fragility and strength of the marriage and family

April 3, 2027

The Letters: Pauline letters and Letters written by other Apostles

May 15, 2027

The mission of Marriage and Family

May 15, 2027

The Book of Revelation

2027-2028

Level 1

YOUTH MINISTRY AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

This aims at equipping ministers for accompaniment of youth and young adults to know and follow Christ and be the hope within their communities, schools and society.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

This intermediate course series aims at awakening the students to a coherent commitment to live out their faith through acts of service, social justice, and evangelization.

October 2, 2027

The centrality of Jesus for young people. Youth and young adults are called to be disciples of Jesus in today's world

October 2, 2027

Life and dignity of the human person

November 6, 2027

Discipleship in community. Community is vital for young people, it fosters sense of belonging, purpose and support

November 6, 2027

Call to family, community and participation

January 8, 2028

Role of young people in bringing Christ to the world

January 8, 2028

Rights and responsibilities

February 5, 2028

Challenges of young people to living their faith: social media and peer pressure, cultural and societal conflicts, materialism, internal and personal struggles, etc.

February 5, 2028

Option for the poor and vulnerable

March 4, 2028

Pastoral care of the young people: equipping them for their spiritual growth, building authentic relationships, empowering them through service and involvement

March 4, 2028

The dignity of work and the rights of the workers

April 1, 2028

Accompany young people to discern their particular vocation in the world: in the workplace, marriage, single life, priesthood or consecrated life

April 1, 2028

Solidarity

May 6, 2028

Young people: called to evangelize other young people, their families and the communities

May 6, 2028

Care for God's creation

2028-2029

Level 1

LITURGY

Liturgy offers comprehensive study of the core principles of the Sacred Liturgy designed to transform routine worship into an intentional, mystical encounter with Jesus Christ

October 1, 2028

History of the Mass

November 1, 2028

Theological principles of Liturgy:
Trinitarian and Paschal Mystery

January 1, 2029

Aim of the Liturgy: Glorification of God
and sanctification of humanity

February 1, 2029

Ecclesial and Mystical Body in the Liturgy

March 1, 2029

The Sacramental and Mystagogical
Principles

April 1, 2029

Rites and Preparation

May 1, 2029

Practical Application and Ministry

PENTATEUCH, JUDGES AND KINGS

This aims at providing foundational knowledge of biblical history, God's character and key theological themes like creation, covenant and law.

October 1, 2028

General introduction about the first Five
books of the OT
The book of Genesis

November 1, 2028

The book of Exodus

January 1, 2029

The book of Leviticus

February 1, 2029

The book of Numbers

March 1, 2029

The book of Deuteronomy

April 1, 2029

The book of Judges

May 1, 2029

The books of Kings



Intermediate Course Series Level 2

THEOLOGY PROGRAM

Intermediate Course Series Level 2 is a 3-year Advanced Certification Program for Master Catechist Certification and Advanced Studies Certification for Lay Ministry Leaders.

Requirements: Basic Certification and A course of ICS Level 1
A Diocesan Master Catechist Certification and Advanced Studies Certification will be given at the end of the 3-year program of ICS Level 2

2026-2027

Level 2

REVELATION AND TRANSMISSION

This series aims at assisting the lay people to a deeper understanding of God's self-revelation, moving their heart, and strengthening their faith in believing it.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST (CHRISTOLOGY)

The Person of Christ series aims at leading the lay people to understand profoundly the identity of Jesus as both fully God and fully human, to have deeper knowledge and confidence in Jesus who assumed human conditions through the Incarnation and to live a life redeemed by His passion, death and Resurrection

October 10, 2026

God's initiative in revealing himself in deeds and words

October 10, 2026

The Mystery of Incarnation

November 14, 2026

Synopsis of God's Revelation from Creation to Christ

November 14, 2026

The Word of God became flesh for our Salvation

January 16, 2027

The fullness of God's Revelation is Christ

January 16, 2027

Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God, the Father, who is Love

February 13, 2027

Obedience of faith as human response to God's Revelation

February 13, 2027

Only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear

March 13, 2027

Revelation is transmitted through Sacred Scripture

March 13, 2027

We share in the divine nature through our union with Christ

April 10, 2027

Transmission through Sacred Tradition

April 10, 2027

Passion and death of Jesus Christ

May 22, 2027

Interpreted by the Magisterium

May 22, 2027

Resurrection of Jesus Christ

2027-2028

Level 2

THE EARLY CHURCH

This aims at discovering how the power of the Holy Spirit birthed and enabled the early Church to grow, spread the Gospel and persevere. The Book of the Acts of Apostles chronicles the actions of the Holy Spirit in the early history of Christian Church.

October 9, 2027

The early Christian community and its characteristics

November 13, 2027

Roles of the apostles

January 22, 2028

Persecutions and martyrdom of early Christians

February 12, 2028

Growth and expansion: inclusion of Gentiles, missionary journeys

March 11, 2028

Antioch: First community where followers were called "Christian"

April 8, 2028

The Apostolic Fathers/ First Council of Nicaea in 325

May 13, 2028

Institutional growth- development of major Christian centers in Cities like Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem

THE HOLY TRINITY

This aims at knowing the Holy Trinity as the foundation for my life as a believer, called to relate personally with God whose nature is relational, love and communion. The Holy Trinity provides the blueprint for relationships and unity.

October 9, 2027

The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith. One God, Three Persons.

November 13, 2027

God is Love: Jesus revealed God not as a solitary being: the Father is Love, the Son is love and the Holy Spirit is Love

January 22, 2028

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are equally divine and possess same divine attributes

February 12, 2028

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct from one another through their eternal and relational roles. Perichoresis.

March 11, 2028

The action of the Holy Trinity in the world: the Father creates, the Son redeems, the Holy Spirit sanctifies

April 8, 2028

Contemplate and experience the Indwelling of the Holy Trinity in us

May 13, 2028

The Holy Trinity as the model for human relationships

2028-2029

Level 2

SYNOPTICS

This aims at gaining a deeper understanding of Jesus' life and ministry by reading the synoptic Gospels side-by-side. Each Gospel writer presents Jesus from a unique perspective.

JOHN

This aims at understanding the person and work of Jesus with more developed theological reflections. In John 20:31, John expressed the purpose of writing the Gospel- that we may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God and by believing we may have eternal life.

October 2028

The synoptic problem: why the 3 Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke have many similarities?

October 2028

John's perspective of Jesus: The Eternal Word who was with God and was God

November 2028

The synoptics and their common themes: Life and ministry of Jesus

November 2028

John 20:31- purpose of the Gospel of John: Believe in Jesus as the Son of God and receive Eternal Life

January 2029

Synoptics: Miracles and parables of Jesus

January 2029

The Miracles: signs

February 2029

Synoptics: Passion and Resurrection of Jesus

February 2029

Relationship of Jesus with the Father

March 2029

Distinctiveness of Matthew

March 2029

Relationship of Jesus with the Holy Spirit

April 2029

Distinctiveness of Mark

April 2029

Relationship of Jesus with Mother Mary

May 2029

Distinctiveness of Luke

May 2029

Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection

ADVANCED STUDIES & MASTERS

For those who will "Form the Formators".

- Lay leaders responsible for lay formation in parishes or deaneries
- Master Catechists or candidates for a Master Catechist Certificate

Intermediate Course Series Level 2 is a 3-year Advanced Certification Program for Master Catechist Certification and Advanced Studies Certification for Lay Ministry Leaders.

Universities and Institutes for Advanced Studies and Master Catechist Degrees

1. Santa Clara Jesuit School of University
2. University of St. Thomas | Department of Theology - Maestría de Artes en Teología Pastoral (MATP)
3. Loyola University of Chicago - Institute of Pastoral Studies
4. Holy Apostles College & Seminary
5. Franciscan- Theology Bachelor's Degree
6. Lay Mission Project (Advanced Studies)

The Diocese of Sacramento has partnered with other Catholic Institutions that provide courses. Currently, we have partnership with Notre Dame McGrath Institute, Franciscan Catechetical Institute and Catechetical Programs of Augustine Institute.



McGRATH INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE



For more information about the Lay Leadership Formation Programs:

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