



# CALLED BY NAME

## Catechist Formation and Certification Process Manual

Office of Lifelong Formation  
2018–19







## Jesus, the Master Catechist

Lord Jesus,  
You are the master catechist,  
through your love and compassion,  
you lead us on the path to holiness.

You kindly call men and women by name  
to serve as witness of your love.

Bless those who are responding to the call.

May they be filled with your spirit,  
so their faith lead others closer to your Father  
and their loving witness facilitates an encounter  
with you in their daily lives.

Guide them as they listen to your words  
so they may echo your message  
and accompany others in their journey of faith.

Amen



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October 15, 2018

Dear Catechetical Leaders,

The Holy Father calls all of us to live our catechetical mission as a service by preaching the Gospel through concrete actions. The Holy Father has said that, "to be a catechist is a vocation of service in the Church; what has been received as a gift from God must in turn be transmitted." These words ring true, especially as we continue the journey of Renew My Church here in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

It is imperative that we continue to answer the call of the Gospel to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ. I encourage you to utilize this resource provided to you by the Office of Lifelong Formation to help you live out your mission in the Catholic Church.

Please be assured of my prayers as you continue to fulfill your vocation and support your parish's efforts to form and transform catechists as missionary disciples of Christ. May God continue to bless you and your family. With every good wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cardinal George".

Archbishop of Chicago





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September 1, 2018

Dear Catechetical Leaders,

In the Gospel of Matthew, we are told to, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (28: 19-20). You play a key role in leading the 2.2 million Catholics here in the Archdiocese of Chicago to make disciples of others, allowing them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

As we undergo the *Renew My Church* process together as a community, it is imperative that we respond to the call to holiness by not only forming disciples but also by personally acting as Christ's missionary disciples ourselves. In leading by example, we expound the efforts to form and transform children, youth, young adults, and families to have a true, intentional encounter with Jesus Christ. Know that by doing so, you are, and will continue to be, an inspiration to your faith community.

I encourage you to share and utilize this catechetical resource provided by the Department of Parish Vitality and Mission to guide members of your parish in deepening their connection with Jesus Christ as we journey together with Him on the path of lifelong formation.

Know that I am truly grateful for your leadership. You are in the prayers of all of us here in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and we will continue to support you in the lifelong formation process in every way that we can. May God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Peter Wojcik".

Fr. Peter Wojcik  
Pastoral Leader and Director of the Department of Parish Vitality and Mission

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



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August 31, 2018

Dear Catechetical Leaders,

As part of the mission of the Office of Lifelong Formation to accompany, equip, and support the ongoing formation efforts of our parish leadership, we are pleased to present the new Certification Manual. The intention is for this manual to provide essential tools. These include all the basics on what parish leaders need to successfully implement the certification process for their catechists and ensure that each catechist's experience of ongoing formation becomes an inspiring journey of discipleship that deepens their relationship with Christ as well as their sense of love, mission, joy and knowledge in this wonderful ministry that serves Christ and His people.

This manual provides essential tools you will need, including an introduction to the certification process, key terminology, roles, and necessary forms. As the catechist certification program is refined, it is important to note that this manual will be revised annually to reflect those changes. Therefore, updates will be announced and published at the beginning of July each year.

The calling and vocation of the catechist as a lifelong disciple of Christ is at the heart of how our certification and ongoing formation process is structured. This process is meant to inspire, train, sustain, and renew those who are living their own journey of faith and to support their mission of sharing the Gospel with others.

A missionary journey is never easy. The Office of Lifelong Formation is committed to providing parishes and their leadership with innovative tools needed to train catechists to build a culture of evangelization and lifelong formation. In this way, parish leaders will accompany them in their lifelong journey by feeding their hearts and minds for the long walk ahead.

May God continue to bless your work and ministry of forming disciples of Christ in the service of others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan L. Amann".

Susan L. Amann  
Associate Director



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## INTRODUCTION

The certification and ongoing formation of catechists and Catholic school teachers is a long-standing tradition in the Archdiocese of Chicago which has reached thousands of faithful disciples who have chosen to dedicate themselves to becoming certified catechists. The Office of Lifelong Formation informs, forms, and transforms catechists and ministers within the Archdiocese of Chicago, opening their eyes to the living presence of Christ in the life of our Church today by offering ongoing formation and certification that awakens spirits and inspires hearts. This process also equips them with the necessary knowledge of the Catholic faith, so they may be able to form and lead the Church to a deeper relationship with Christ. In addition to the Office of Catholic Schools, the Office of Lifelong Formation has partnered with My Catholic Faith Delivered to offer convenience, affordability, flexibility, and uniformity through online and on-site formation and certification courses in English and Spanish.

“Catechesis is a responsibility of the entire Christian community” (GDC, no. 220). The archdiocesan *Religious Education Policies and Procedures, Book III “The Teaching Office of the Church”* in conjunction with the General Directory of Catechesis, and National Directory of Catechesis inspire the parish and archdiocesan roles and responsibilities for catechist certification. The Archdiocese of Chicago provides structure and guidelines in accordance with policies of the archdiocese and national catechist certification standards.

To achieve success with the catechist certification process, the Office of Lifelong Formation, parish formation programs, and Catholic schools must work collaboratively as a people of God dedicated to the mission of Renew My Church in making disciples, building communities, and inspiring witness.

“YOU ARE THE LIGHT  
OF THE WORLD”

**Matthew 5:14**

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## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Office of Lifelong Formation is to lift, form, and empower parishes, their leadership, ministries, and parishioners, enabling a lifelong process of formation that inspires and deepens faith in and a relationship with Christ.

As part of the Office of Lifelong Formation, the Certification Team supports and embraces the mission to inform, form, and transform catechists and ministers into the living presence of Christ in the life of our Church today. The Certification Process aims to facilitate an encounter with Christ through the spiritual, theological, and ministerial formation components that lead to a stronger community of faith. Catechists respond to the call of discipleship by serving children, youth, young adults, and adults in our faith communities.

*“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES  
OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN  
THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF  
THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”*

**Matthew 28:19**





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# PROFILE OF A CATECHIST

The role and responsibilities of a catechist can be defined by referencing sources that reflect on what Catechesis is about. The apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (CT) describes evangelization as a “very rich, complex and dynamic reality made up of elements...or moments”, with catechesis being a very remarkable moment in the process of evangelization and foundational to the mission of the Church. (CT, 18) It includes the intentional and systematic effort to enable all to grow in faith and discipleship (CT 21). *The General Catechetical Directory* emphasizes that the purpose of catechesis, is intended to make faith become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction (GCD, 17). Moreover, the introduction of the apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (CT) labels catechesis as a lifelong process of initial conversion, education, and ongoing conversion. Through word, worship, service, and community, it seeks to lead all God’s people to an ever-deepening relationship with God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) affirms that “(a)t the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, ...To catechize is to ‘reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person’...Catechesis aims at putting ‘people...in communion with Jesus Christ...’” (CCC426).

In the Gospel of Matthew (28:19), Jesus commands the Church to continue His mission. The great commission has been handed to women and men whom God has called to proclaim the Good News. These men and women minister in their local communities through witness, prayer, service, and building a welcoming community.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) reminds us of the important role of the catechists. Jesus entrusted the apostles with the responsibility of witnessing to and handing on the faith. The apostles made use of brief summaries by which all could come to know the fundamental content of Christian belief: The Gospel. (NDC, 23) This is a good reminder of the importance of being formed and developing the skills to share our beliefs by example.

## The Call to be a Catechist

The apostolic work of the catechist springs from the Sacrament of Baptism through which all believers come to share in the prophetic ministry of Christ and the evangelizing mission of the Church. Saint Paul reflects on this important work by praying for all disciples, “...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph 3:17-19, New American Bible, Revised Edition).

The call to the ministry of catechesis is a vocation, an interior call, the voice of the Holy Spirit. The call and response to become a catechist is recognized in the local Church by the bishop. The response to this call includes willingness to give one’s time and talent, not only to catechizing others, but to one’s own growth and understanding of the faith. (NDC, 206) Although the need for catechists is great, care and sensitivity must be used in the recruitment and selection of those called to the ministry.

## Vocation of the Catechist

The *General Directory for Catechesis* tells us that catechists have a vocation, a calling from the Lord rooted in Baptism to carry out His mandate to proclaim the Gospel. And furthermore, it states that, “The Church awakens and discerns this divine vocation and confers the mission to

catechize. The Lord Jesus invites men and women, in a special way, to follow him, teacher and formator of disciples.” (GDC, 231). Pope Francis reminds catechists that “catechesis is a pillar of faith education and we need good catechists! ...To be a catechist may be difficult and requires a great deal of work, and although the results are not always what we hope for, teaching the faith is something beautiful! It is perhaps the best legacy we can pass on: the faith! To help children, young people and adults to know and love the Lord more and more is one of the most exciting aspects of education. Catechesis is a vocation: ‘being a catechist’, this is the vocation, not working as a catechist. It means leading people to encounter Christ by our words and our lives, by giving witness.” (September, 2013, Pope Francis addressed catechists on the occasion of the Year of Faith).

## Profile of a Catechist

Some of the essential characteristics of a catechist are:

- Participate actively in the communal worship and sacramental life of the Church.
- Believe deeply in Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church, and desire to share that belief with others.
- Strive always to grow in holiness, receiving the Sacraments frequently, devoting time to prayer and to the ministry of catechesis.
- Commit themselves to their own religious education, growing in their knowledge of the Faith, teaching methods, Scripture, and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Commit themselves to the catechetical ministry.





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# PROCEDURES AND POLICY

The commission for all Catholics to go and make disciples has been reflected and explained in numerous documents. The Archdiocese of Chicago is following these documents to enlighten hearts and to create a path, so all can share the same mission in our local communities. The *General Directory for Catechesis* and the *National Directory for Catechesis* are the pillars for archdiocesan policy.

## General Directory for Catechesis

“...(D)iocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the *formation of lay catechists*... Formation seeks to enable catechists to transmit the Gospel to those who desire to entrust themselves to Jesus Christ. The purpose of formation, therefore, is to make the catechist capable of communicating: ‘The summit and center of catechetical formation lies in an aptitude and ability to communicate the Gospel message’.”

**(GDC #234-235)**

## National Directory for Catechesis

“Programs of formation should be designed to help catechists acquire the knowledge and skills they need to hand on the faith to those entrusted to their care and assist them in living as disciples of Christ”.

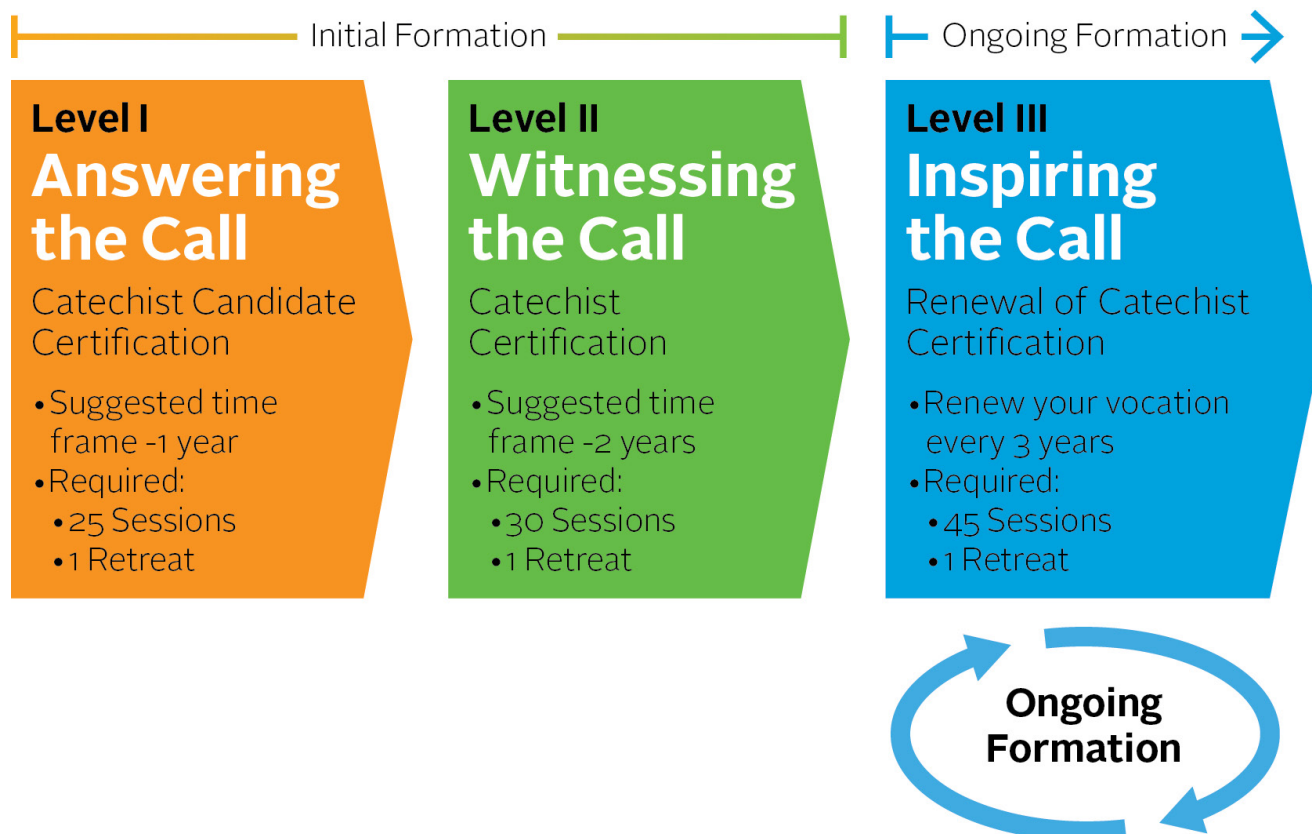
**(NDC #55-A)**

## Archdiocesan Policy

“The director/coordinator of religious education shall be responsible to the pastor for insuring that there be training and formation of the catechetical staff in accord with the policies and procedures of the archdiocese.” (policy # 1201.1)

(Archdiocesan Parish Religious Education Policies and Procedures: Book II, The People of God – Part I)

# THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS



The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that every Christian, including those responding to the vocation as catechists, are called to continual conversion and growth in their faith through frequent reception of sacraments, spiritual direction, and continuous study of the faith. This directory also identifies two important moments in the formation of catechists: initial and ongoing formation. In the initial formation, catechist candidates are introduced to the basic knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and practice. Pastoral skills and knowledge for the accompaniment of the faithful are also included in this initial formation so the catechist candidates can become familiar with resources and practical supports they may need in their ministry. The second moment of ongoing formation corresponds to the continual need for formation and growth.

## Level I – Answering the Call

All catechists have said “yes” to God at some point in their own personal journey. It’s the same “yes” that has been echoed through generations of holy men and women in our Church.

It is important to note that this process already assumes that the catechist candidate has already experienced an initial encounter with Christ through the evangelization and formation efforts of the parish community. The candidate has been invited by the pastor and the parish community to answer the call of this very important vocation as catechist. With this in mind, the first level of the certification process is “Answering the Call”. This level helps the candidate not only receive all of the essentials he/she needs to immediately go into service through the spiritual, theological, and ministerial initial formation courses, but also marks the beginning of the ongoing process of forming the heart, mind, and leadership in ministry. Candidates participate in the “Answering



the Call” retreat which helps them realize God’s presence in the process and the importance of the role of catechist. This retreat experience inspires them with the joy of the call. Catechist candidates receive certification as a Catechist Candidate from their parish upon completion of this level.

## **Level II – Witnessing the Call**

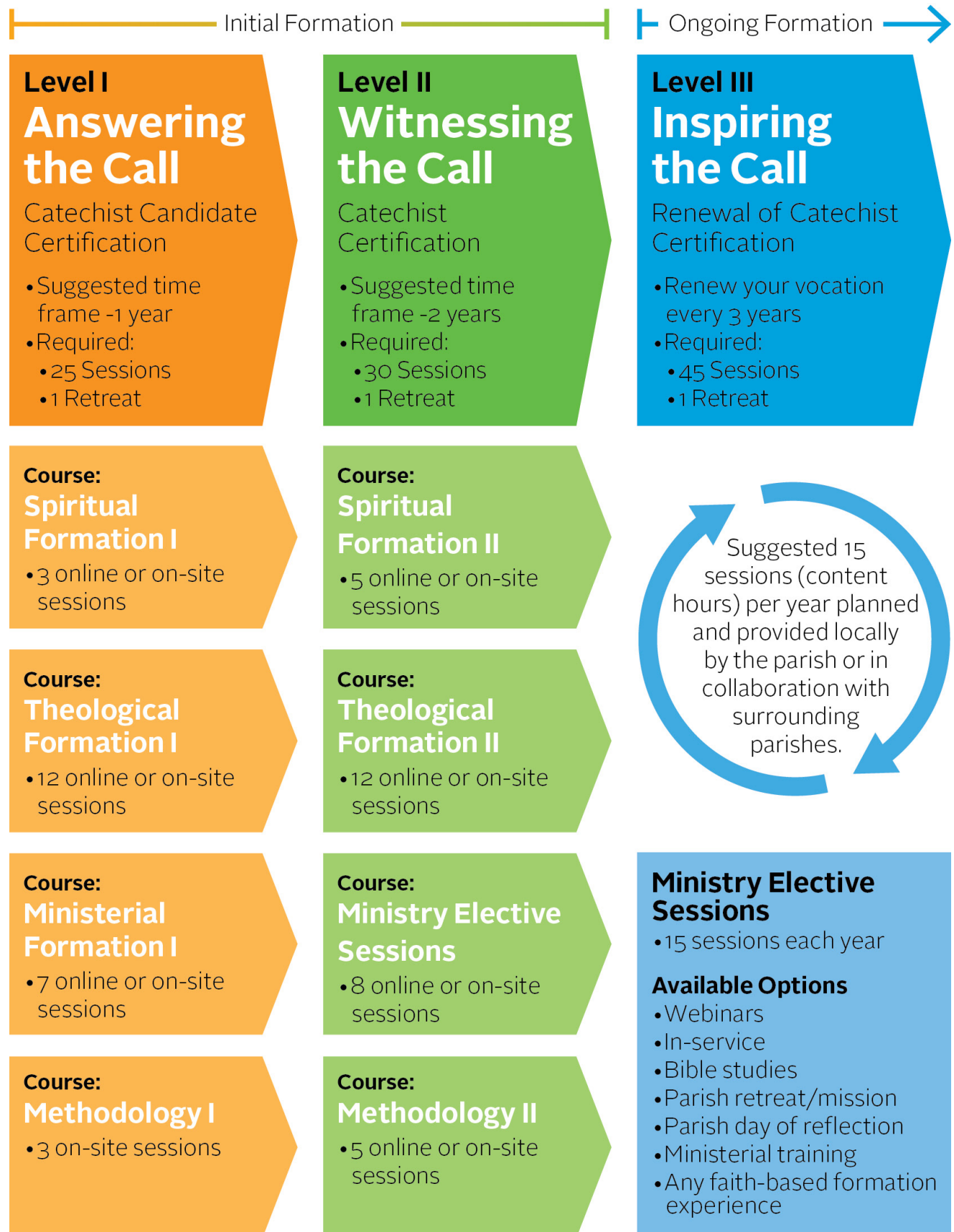
Answering the call of the catechist is a privilege because those who do have accepted the invitation to participate in God’s great plan of building His Kingdom. As parish catechists and Catholic school teachers continue to learn, they will also continue to witness to their Catholic faith.

In this level, the Catechist Candidate deepens his/her life in Christ through the Spiritual Formation Course, knowledge in Christ and His Church through the Theological Formation Course, and mission in Christ through the Ministerial Formation Course. It is at this level where catechists begin to focus their formation according to their particular ministries and ministerial needs through the elective tracks. The catechist receives Archdiocesan Certification as a Catechist at the end of Level II.

## **Level III – Inspiring the Call**

All disciples of Christ are called to participate in the ongoing cycle of renewal in Christ and for Christ. The first two levels of the catechist certification process slowly form the catechist as a disciple of Christ that understands the importance of an ongoing, lifelong formation that renews the heart, mind, leadership, and spirit. Therefore, Level III is an ongoing process. A certified catechist receives a renewal of their certification upon the completion of three years of continuous formation.

# Certification Process Roadmap



## Level I – Answering the Call

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All first-time catechists with no previous catechetical formation must complete 25 sessions on basic spiritual, theological, and ministerial formation in addition to attending a certification retreat within the recommended time period of one year. Sessions are offered both online (for which scholarships are available) and in person. After completion, parish catechists and Catholic school teachers will receive initial certification as catechist candidates. Catholic school teachers who are non-Catholics are required to complete only the 25 online sessions. Upon completion, they will receive an acknowledgment of doing so.

### Courses

### Level I – Sessions

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#### Spiritual Formation I

- The Big Picture of Spirituality
- The Person and Spirituality of the Catechists
- Introduction to the Life of Prayer

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#### Theological Formation I

- Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition
- Salvation History through the Old Testament
- Catechesis and Scripture: Understanding the Word of God
- Essential Elements of the Christian Faith
- History of the Apostles and Nicene Creeds: Overview of the History and Theology of the Church
- The Nature of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of the Church: How We Are Created in God's Image
- Liturgy and Prayer, Action of Christ and His Church, Baptism, and Eucharist
- Sacraments of Confirmation, Matrimony, and Holy Orders
- Healing Sacraments, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Dying
- Sources for Knowing How to Live Justly
- God's Grace and the Reality of Sin
- Formation of a Moral Conscience and our Relationship with God and Others

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#### Ministerial Formation I

- Evangelization in the Mission of the Church
- Kerygmatic Catechesis and Six Tasks of Catechesis
- The Role and Vocation of the Catechist
- Readiness to Receive the Message
- Old Testament Methodology
- New Testament Methodology
- Divine Pedagogy

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#### Methodology I

- Catechetical Methods (three content hours)
-



## Level II – Witnessing the Call

To complete Level II, parish catechists and Catholic school teachers must complete 30 sessions and a certification retreat within the recommended time period of two years. Spiritual and theological courses must be completed during the first year and the Methodology II (for Catholic school teachers, Ministerial II) course and ministerial electives must be completed during the second year. Sessions are offered both online (for which scholarships are available for spiritual and theological courses) and in person. After completion, participants will receive certification as catechists. This certification must be renewed in Level III.

### Courses

### Level II – Sessions

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#### Spiritual Formation II

- Prayer in the Life of Jesus
- The Practice of Prayer
- Docility to the Holy Spirit
- Prayer
- Catholic Devotions

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#### Theological Formation II

- The New Testament: God's Revelation Through Jesus
- The Early Christians' Experience of God in Their Lives
- The Holy Spirit Guides the Church
- Jesus Christ: Incarnation and Redemption (Paschal Mystery)
- Mary: Mother of Jesus, Mother of God and Mother of the Church
- The Kingdom of God
- Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
- Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick
- Sacraments of Service to the Community: Holy Orders and Matrimony
- Primary Point of Reverence for Moral Living
- Becoming True Disciples of Christ
- The Magisterium: Moral and Social Teaching

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#### Ministerial Formation II

Ministry elective sessions (equivalent to one hour of content) planned and offered locally by the parish or in collaboration with other parishes or publishers. The emphasis of this formation is ministerial skills. The Office of Lifelong Formation will also offer webinars that counts as ministry elective. Catechists are to complete eight sessions

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#### Methodology II

- The Teachings of Jesus
  - Family Catechesis
  - Special Needs Students
  - Contextual Catechesis
  - Prayer in Difficult Times
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## Level III – Inspiring the Call

After achieving catechist certification, catechists are to complete the suggested 15 elective sessions (content hours) of ongoing formation every year in a three-year cycle and attend a certification retreat within the cycle. Those who are already certified from the Fostering Faith certification process should start at Level III.

### Ministry Elective Sessions

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Minimum of 15 sessions (content hours) per year planned and provided locally by the parish or in collaboration with surrounding parishes.

#### Available Options

- Webinars
  - In-service
  - Parish retreat/mission
  - Parish day of reflection
  - Ministerial training
  - Any faith-based formation experience
  - Online elective sessions available at [formedcatholiconline.com](https://formedcatholiconline.com)
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## Certification Retreats

A retreat is a time set aside from daily life to listen to God and discern how God is speaking into one's life. A retreat is required to complete each level of the certification process. Making this retreat provides the space and opportunity to connect with God in a moment of prayer and reflection within a community of faith. The Certification Retreat is focused in two important moments in the ministry of catechesis: listening and answering the call as catechist. This retreat explores this advent of the vocation as catechists through prayer, guided reflections, activities, a meal, journaling and silent meditation.

The spiritual growth of catechists promotes effectiveness in their ministry. They develop the skills to share their faith experiences rather than merely teaching from a book.

Catechetical Leaders can schedule a certification retreat at any point in the certification process. It is recommended, however, to schedule it separate from parish retreats or days of reflection that might be associated with the liturgical calendar.

Catechist Certification Retreats are to be administered in the same manner as an on-site certification session. The Catechetical Leader, Retreat Facilitator and Hosting Site Administrator follow roles and responsibility guidelines as outlined in the sections below.

The Certification Retreat Manual (or the appendix) will provide more information on the goals and objectives for the retreat and the associated costs.

## Online and On-Site Course Costs

Level	Course	Sessions	Cost Online	Cost On-site	Scholarship for online sessions
Level 1	Spiritual	3	\$19	\$6	\$66.50
Level 1	Theological	12	\$72	\$6	(50% of \$133)
Level 1	Ministerial	7	\$42	\$6	
Level 1	Methodology (on-site)	3	N/A	\$6	No Scholarship
	Certification Retreat	5 hours	\$6	\$6	No Scholarship
<b>Total cost</b>			<b>\$145</b>	<b>\$30</b>	

Level	Course	Sessions	Cost Online	Cost On-site	Scholarship for online sessions
Level 2 (year 1)	Spiritual	5	\$34	\$6	\$58 (50% of \$116)
Level 2 (year 1)	Theological	12	\$82	\$6	
Level 2 (year 2)	Methodology	5	\$34	\$6	No Scholarship
Level 2 (year 2)	Electives	8			No Scholarship
	Certification Retreat	5 hours	\$6	\$6	No Scholarship
<b>Total cost</b>			<b>\$156</b>	<b>\$24</b>	

Level	Course	Sessions	Cost Online/On-site	Scholarship
Level 3 (year 1)	Electives	15	(*) Paid or free	No Scholarship
Level 3 (year 2)	Electives	15	webinars, In-Service, parish retreat/mission, parish day of reflection, ministerial training, etc.	
Level 3 (year 3)	Electives	15		
	Certification Retreat	5 hours	\$6	
<b>Total cost</b>			<b>\$6 + any additional cost (*)</b>	



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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following section of the manual is intended to explain the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for those involved in the Catechist Certification process. The key points are:

1. To emphasize the parish community's primary commitment to catechetical ministry.
2. To establish the certainty that "...diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists" (GDC, no 234).
3. To describe role descriptions and responsibilities.
4. To introduce opportunities.
5. To initiate an ongoing dialogue and network of collaborative efforts.



# Parish Catechist

## Role

Catechists are called to share their faith, give witness, pray, model service, and build community. Through word and example, catechists hand on the Catholic faith and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The following are key responsibilities for this role:

- Give active witness to their faith in word and deed both inside and outside the classroom.
- Have a love for and sensitivity toward the students they desire to catechize.
- Communicate effectively with those they catechize.
- Spend the necessary time for training, lesson preparation, and the teaching of classes.
- Teach the required curriculum under the direction of the pastor and catechetical leader.
- Know and abide by the parish and/or diocesan guidelines and policies promoting effective catechesis.
- Keep accurate track of ongoing formation using the elective sessions form.
- Upon completion of Level I, catechists can print a certificate of completion. They should provide this to their parish catechetical leader, and at the parish they will receive official recognition as a Certified Catechist Candidate.

## Requirements

- An adult, at least 18 years of age.
- Responsible, trustworthy, and competent.
- Provide an email and agree to have an online account created in their name.
- Be an advocate of catechist formation and the Archdiocese of Chicago certification process.
- Catholic in good standing, called by Christ to this ministry.
- Participate in the spiritual, theological, and methodological training and formation.

## Opportunities

Catechists will receive formation toward their own growth and deeper relationship with Christ. Among many opportunities throughout their ministry, catechists will have the following opportunities:

- Annual retreats; one retreat is required per level. Other retreat opportunities will count as ministerial electives.
- Training in ministerial skills and human development to be more effective in the transmission of faith.
- Receive faith-based formation in English and Spanish, online or on-site.
- Yearly updates and new trends in formation thorough the Chicago Faith Congress. The congress counts as ministerial elective.
- Direct communication with the Office of Lifelong Formation through the online platform [formedcatholiconline.com](https://formedcatholiconline.com).



## Online Parish Administrator

An Online Parish Administrator must be established at each parish. This role may be assigned to the parish catechetical leader. Alternatively, the pastor and catechetical leader may designate this responsibility to a member of the parish staff, catechetical ministry, or parish community.

### Requirements:

- An adult, at least 18 years of age.
- Responsible, trustworthy, and competent.
- Have basic knowledge of digital and internet data systems.
- Be an advocate of catechist formation and the Archdiocese of Chicago certification process.
- Understand and be able to explain and offer feedback pertaining to administrator tasks.
- Be committed to ongoing formation including orientations, trainings, and workshops specific to the role of the Online Parish Administrator.

### Role

The role of the Online Parish Administrator is to be responsible for administering the parish group account on the [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com) system. This online site is facilitated and implemented by the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office for Lifelong Formation and supported by My Catholic Faith Delivered.

The following are key responsibilities for this role:

- Serve as administrative support to all members of the parish catechist certification community.
- Provide help with online and onsite registration, logging into the system, registering for retreats, sessions, workshops and navigating the system, etc.
- Assist with procedures for payment of fees by catechists and/or the parish as established by the policies and procedures of each individual parish.
- Monitor the progress of parish catechists and their participation on the online system.
- Responsibly update parish group members, by assuring the addition of new catechists to the system.
- Maintain accuracy of active and inactive group members by identifying catechists that are no longer parish catechists.
- Print reports from the system that will be instrumental to tracking and forming the progress of parish catechists. Reports include catechist progress reports and other parish data analysis reports.
- Collaborate with parish catechetical leader to register certification sessions that will be hosted by and at the parish.
- Assist catechists in the printing of certificates.
- Promote computer accessibility for catechists to use for registration and online formation sessions. The number of computers available at each parish is to be determined at the parish level.



## Opportunities

The online system allows catechists to print their certificates. The certificate is valid only with the signature of a Parish Leader (pastor or catechetical leader). It is highly recommended that the presentation of catechist certificates be established in a significantly affirming manner. Catechetical Sunday (third Sunday in September) presents an ideal platform for catechist commissioning, recognition and distribution of valid catechist certificates with a special blessing.

An Online Parish Administrator can engage in pastoral accompaniment with the parish catechetical staff, ministers, and, most importantly, catechists working towards certification.



## Hosting Site Administrator

A Hosting Site Administrator must be established at each parish providing on-site formation including retreats. This role may be assigned to the parish catechetical leader hosting the formation. Alternatively, the pastor and catechetical leader may designate this responsibility to a member of the parish staff, catechetical ministry, or parish community.

### Requirements:

- An adult, at least 18 years of age.
- Responsible, trustworthy and competent.
- Have basic knowledge of digital and internet data systems.
- Be an advocate of catechist formation and the Archdiocese of Chicago certification process.
- Understand, be able to explain, and offer feedback pertaining to administrator tasks.
- Be committed to ongoing formation including orientations, trainings, and workshops specific to the role.

### Role

The role of the Hosting Site Administrator is to be responsible for on-site courses facilitated and implemented by the parish or group of parishes under approval of the Office of Lifelong Formation. This planning and implementation of on-site courses is facilitated in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office for Lifelong Formation and supported by the Certification Team and *My Catholic Faith Delivered*.

The following are key responsibilities for this role:

- Serve as administrative support for the hosting on-site formation, keeping records of attendance, and communicating with other parishes.
- Submit requests to the Office of Lifelong Formation for approval of on-site courses include the following:  
Instructor Form ([link](#))  
Live Event Form ([Level I](#)) ([Level II](#))
- Record attendance of catechists attending courses or retreats. Catechists should already have their accounts set up. If they do not have accounts, their attendance still needs to be recorded in the attendance form. The Office of Lifelong Formation will create accounts for them once the attendance form is submitted.
- Print and provide the attendance form for the Catechist Formation Instructor who will keep record of the attendance and assessment scores of participants. Collect the attendance form at the end of each session. At the end of the course, make a copy of the attendance forms and send the originals to the Office of Lifelong Formation. Provide proof of attendance to the catechetical leaders who sent catechists to the hosting site.
- Collect any fees to be paid by the catechists for on-site courses or retreats. The Office of Lifelong Formation collects \$6.00 per person per course or retreat to cover administrative costs (see page 18 for costs). After submitting attendance forms, the Office of Lifelong Formation will send a quote (like an invoice) to cover this administrative cost to the Hosting Site Administrator via email. This quote must be signed and returned to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) within 30 days.
- Collaborate with parish catechetical leader(s) to request on-site certification sessions that will be hosted by the parish.



## Opportunities

The Hosting Site Administrator can coordinate and network with instructors and other parishes, strengthening the collaboration between ministries and parishes.

If the Hosting Site Administrator is present at the instruction of courses, they can also assess the performance of instructors and the learning process of catechists. This information is very valuable especially when evaluating the formation of catechist. It is crucial to assess the different elements taking place in the planning and implementation of the formation. Pay especial attention to quality of instructors, optimization of resources, and environment for the courses to identify challenges and opportunities for future planning.





## Catechist Formation Instructor

The Catechist Formation Instructor is an accredited parish leader who, with the approval and training of the Office of Lifelong Formation, commits to instructing catechist certification courses. An instructor is highly experienced and competent in the areas being taught. Instructors are to be faithful teachers of inspiration to catechists. Session guides approved and provided by the Office of Lifelong Formation are the core reference for achieving course objectives by instructors.

### Requirements

- Be a passionate and dynamic missionary disciple of Christ who can adapt to the catechists' learning styles to provide an effective witness to the faith.
- Be in good standing with his/her parish, the Vicar's office and the Office of Lifelong Formation.
- Have an account open in the archdiocesan online platform.
- Participate in the instructors' training scheduled and provided by the Office of Lifelong formation every year.
- Participate in the Chicago Faith Congress every year (highly recommended).
- Capable of preparing courses and adapting the instruction methodology based on the cultural needs and level of formation of participants.
- Submit the **Instructor Form** along with a current curriculum vitae and be approved by the Office of Lifelong Formation. This submittal should especially reflect the instructor's formation and professional development. Submit the Instructor Form to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).

### Role

The instructor shares administrative responsibilities. This includes:

- Assisting with the planning and actual setup for the course, especially with any audio-visual needed for the session (projector, board, handouts, suggest room setup, etc.).
- Recording attendance of course participants at the beginning of each session using the Attendance Form. This form is saved by the Hosting Site Administrator.
- Facilitating, collecting, and scoring pre- and post- assessments using the attendance form. The printed and scored pre- and post-assessment will be saved by the Hosting Site Administrator.

Please Note: Catechist Formation Instructors are responsible for the instruction of courses and course specifications (including retreats) assigned with the approval from the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Lifelong Formation. Unapproved courses or course content are unacceptable for classroom use. Instructors not in compliance with presenting approved courses or using unapproved content may have their instructor status revoked.

## Opportunities

- To teach, to reaffirm, and develop what is known. This allows for personal growth and formation.
- To accept challenges for new learning opportunities and practices.
- Stipend: The instructor (or parish leader) of the hosting parish are responsible for payment arrangements and agreements. It is advisable that the pastor of the hosting parish be consulted. The suggested stipend to instruct one session, consisting of one hour of content, is a minimum of \$50. A course with three sessions would result in a total stipend of \$150. The stipend may be waived by an instructor. The choice to waive the stipend is to be reflected in an agreement between the hosting parish site and the instructor. The format for the agreement to waive the instructor stipend is to be established at the parish level.



## Parish Catechetical Leader

The Parish Catechetical Leader is the person who organizes and directs the catechetical program under the direction of the pastor and in collaboration with the pastoral staff. Parish Catechetical Leaders in the Archdiocese of Chicago are known by different titles according to their roles. Catechetical leader role titles include, but are not limited to Directors of Religious Education, Coordinators of Religious Education, Lifelong Formation Directors/Coordinators, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Directors/Coordinators, and Adult Faith Formation Directors/Coordinators.

### Role

The primary task of Parish Catechetical Leaders within the Archdiocesan Catechist Certification Program is to ensure that catechists have the appropriate spiritual, theological, and ministerial formation training to be effective in communicating the deposit of the faith to those they catechize. “Under no circumstances should the initial formation of new catechists be improvised or left to the initiative of the candidates themselves” (NDC, 55-D).

#### Archdiocesan Policy

The Parish Catechetical Leader “shall be responsible to the pastor for insuring there be training and formation of the catechetical staff in accord with the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese, the Office for Religion Education, and the Office of Catholic Education” (*Policy, no. 1201.1*).

The Office for Lifelong Formation standardizes the formation and certification process for catechists.

### Responsibility

The Parish Catechetical Leader initiates and guides the parish process of catechist formation and certification by:

- Providing inspiration, guidance and accompaniment to catechists to complete the certification process as defined in the Catechist Roles, Responsibilities and Opportunities section (page 20).
- Committing to be effective agents of communication between catechists and the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Lifelong Formation. Particular attention shall be exercised when expressing formation and certification opportunities and updates.
- Active participation at orientations and trainings offered by the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Lifelong Formation to better adapt, administer, and facilitate the certification process at the parish level.
- Responsible for the enrollment, assignment of levels, payment, and on-site formation planning for the online and on-site certification process.
- All catechetical leaders (by default) are to assume the role of Online Parish Administrator and Hosting Site Administrator. In these roles, catechetical leaders will partner with the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Lifelong Formation. Catechetical leaders have the option of assigning a representative for these roles from the parish staff or catechetical ministry.

Please contact the Office of Lifelong Formation for support, training, and guidance with this role at [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).



## Opportunities

- Establish your parish as a formation center for catechist formation and certification.
- Incorporate Catechetical Sunday into the life of the parish as recommended by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to commission and recognize your catechists' formation and certification achievements. For example, present the Level I: Answering the Call Certificate as Catechist Candidate to eligible catechists on Catechetical Sunday for parish community affirmation and to celebrate catechist certification milestones.
- Collaborate with your pastor, business manager, and other parish leaders that may be of assistance to the formation of catechists.
- Use your discretion to determine if any of your parish catechists may need financial assistance to enroll in catechist certification courses through the available archdiocesan scholarships, and if so, assist them with the Scholarship Request Form.





## Parish Pastors

The *National Directory for Catechesis* indicates the pastor as the local authority who oversees the vision and plan for formation for the entire community. Special importance is dedicated in the encouragement, identification, and initial calling of men and women to be catechist candidates, based on their way of living and skills for the ministry (NDC 54 B-1). Then catechetical leaders continue the process of recruitment, formation, and evaluation of candidates (NDC, 54 B-5).

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that the Pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met (NDC 54 B-1).

According to the norms established by the archbishop, the pastor, in collaboration with the archdiocesan pastoral offices, ensures that:

- Parish Catechists have access to initial and ongoing formation.
- Age appropriate catechesis is provided for adults, youth, and children with catechesis for adults being the parish's primary catechetical mission.
- A total parish catechetical plan is implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership.
- Catechesis of youth and young adults is offered as part of youth ministry within the parish.
- Children and youth are prepared properly for first reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Children receive ongoing catechetical formation that enriches and deepens the sacramental preparation.
- People with special needs are given appropriate catechetical formation.
- The Catechumenate is an essential process in the parish.
- Catechetical formation is adapted to the various cultures within the parish.



## Office of Lifelong Formation

### Certification and Ongoing Formation Team

The Certification and Ongoing Formation team is responsible for the Catechist Certification Process and Ongoing Formation in the Archdiocese of Chicago. We aim to provide parish catechists and school teachers with the means to start or continue their journey as disciples of Christ. While certification is a way to celebrate our achievements and growth, we emphasize ongoing formation as a lifelong process where catechists and school teachers become more effective in their ministries as they grow in their relationship with Christ and become missionary disciples for themselves and for their communities.

### Role

Inform, form, and transform our catechists and ministers to the living presence of Christ in the life of our Church today. Through the certification and ongoing formation process, we strive to awaken our ministers' spirits, inspire their hearts, and equip them with the necessary knowledge of the faith so they may be able to form and lead the Church to a deeper relationship with Christ.

### Responsibility

- Ensure parish leaders know how to implement the certification process in their parishes.
- Provide parish and school leaders with the necessary tools for formation (important tools included in this manual).
- Simplify process for catechists by providing them the necessary tools and procedures.
- Provide resources pertinent to certification throughout the process.
- Provide guidance and support for the formation planning and implementation efforts in a parish or group of parishes.



We Are Here to  
**Help!**

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# STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Office of Lifelong Formation has created several simple steps that will help each individual identify their key role in the implementation of the process. These steps are focused on the initial implementation of the Catechist Certification Process using the online platform.

## Step 1. Become an Online Parish Administrator

**Send an email to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and request to have an account created as administrator.**

If you are a catechetical leader and have not received your login information, please request it at [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org). Provide your full name, the email address you want to use for the formation website, and the name of the parish where you lead.

If you are a pastor that has a newly enrolled catechetical leader, please refer him/her to the Office of Lifelong Formation and we will guide and support them in their role in the certification process. We will also update the administrator of the parish.

Pastors and catechetical leaders can include up to two additional parish staff members or parish ministers to help with the administration of the program as Online Parish Administrators.

## Step 2. Access Your Account

**Log into your account and become familiar with the online platform and tools.**

Make sure to login and explore the dashboard and other features in your account. We will provide training and support. Please make sure you participate in the training for administrators scheduled throughout the year. For more information, please contact us at [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).

## Step 3. Identify Levels of Formation

**Identify your catechists and their level of formation, fill out the [Catechist Registration Form](#), and send it to the Certification Team to create their accounts.**

The certification process requires that all catechists and catechetical leaders have a unique email address that we use as their user identification. No email address can be shared between spouses, family members, or colleagues. Email addresses cannot be duplicated as each catechist needs their unique account to keep all of their record of formation under one place. When you provide this information, we will only create their accounts. There is no cost associated with this step.

The Catechist Registration Form requires you to only complete the following columns: first name, last name and email address for each catechist. Provide information for each of your catechists by completing the Excel spreadsheet. If a catechist currently does not have an email address, please assist them in creating one.

## Step 4. Online or on-site?

**Inform the Certification Team if catechists will be taking courses online or on-site. Scholarships are available only for online courses.**

After filling out and submitting the Catechist Registration Form, Catechetical Leaders will inform the Certification Team about how catechists will start their formation. The two available

options are fully on-site or blended (online and on-site). The Archdiocese of Chicago offers a partial scholarship (50%) to catechists taking online courses. The scholarships will be available for a limited amount of time. To request a scholarship, the catechist account should already be created. The other portion of the cost will be covered by the parish or the catechist. This decision is directly handled by the parish and the catechist. Please refer to the instructions on the [Scholarship Request Form](#) for more information. One Scholarship Request Form is required per scholarship applicant.

## Step 5. Plan your formation

**Plan on-site formation for each level at your parish or in multiple hosting sites in collaboration with other parishes. Include the certification retreat in your plans. Consider the cost while planning.**

The certification process allows parishes to continue offering formation on-site for catechists that feel more comfortable attending sessions in a classroom setting. In Level I, the Methodology course and the certification retreat are only offered on-site. The implementation of on-site courses requires the designation of a Hosting Site Administrator who will submit the necessary forms to the Office of Lifelong Formation and keep records of attendance. To implement on-site courses, the Live Sessions Form ([Level I](#) and [Level II](#)) needs to be submitted indicating the date, time, location and instructor for each session.

**Note:** A publisher in-service training at your parish or vicariate can count as credit for Methodology I. This in-service must include at least three hours of content.

## Step 6. Get your instructors approved

**Instructors will fill and submit a form to the Office of Lifelong Formation to be approved and to have access to the session.**

For on-site courses, Catechetical Leaders can suggest instructors. Part of the approval process requires the use of the [Instructor File Form](#). The completed form needs to be sent to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org). The Certification Team will communicate the approval to the instructor via email. Approved instructors must participate in any ongoing training by the Office of Lifelong Formation.

## Step 7. Submit payment

**Online courses will be available to catechists after payment is received. Credit for completion of on-site courses will be given after payment is received.**

The payment process has different options based on the format the courses are delivered.

### **Online courses:**

- Direct purchase: Catechists can purchase directly from the store. Credit cards are the only way of payment. Access to the courses is automatic.



- **Archdiocesan Billing:** When parishes assume the cost for catechist formation, the Certification Team generates a quote based on the information provided in the catechist registration form. This quote will be sent to the catechetical leader who submitted the registration form. The quote needs to be approved by signature and sent back to our office. The approved amount will be included in the archdiocesan monthly bill with the name “Online Certification”. Once the payment is received and processed, catechists will have access to their online courses. Please note that our office does not receive payments directly. Payments are submitted to Accounts Receivable and our office is notified when payments to Online Certification have been made.

#### **On-site courses and certification retreat:**

**Archdiocesan Billing:** The same payment method as above will apply for certification retreats and on-site courses administrative fees. When parishes assume the cost for catechist formation, the Certification Team generates a quote based on the information provided in the attendance form. The administrative fee of \$6.00 per catechist per course will be included in the quote. This quote will be emailed to the Hosting Site Administrator for approval. The quote needs to be approved by signature and sent back to our office. The approved amount will be included in the archdiocesan monthly bill with the name “Online Certification”. Once the payment is processed, catechists will receive credit for completion of on-site courses.

### **Step 8. Ask for assistance**

**Contact the Certification Team to receive personalized support, general training and guidance on the process and the online platform.**

Phone: **312.534.8606**

Email: [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org)

### **Step 9. Promote ongoing formation**

**Certified catechists need to complete 15 hours of ongoing formation each year.**

For renewal of catechist certification, catechists are to complete 15 hours of ongoing formation. Locally, parishes are invited to offer faith-based formation opportunities to enrich and continue forming catechist and the entire community. The Office of Lifelong Formation will provide webinars and the Chicago Faith Congress as opportunities for ongoing formation.

### **Step 10. Be strategic**

It is highly recommended to partner with parishes in your area to implement on-site courses for each level. Based on the number of catechists in each level, it may be beneficial to open levels in different sites.

Contact the Certification Team and your Lifelong Formation Coordinator to find current and future sites for on-site formation. Publishers can also offer the course Methodology I as an in-service training for your parish.

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Getting Started FAQs

### **I haven't taken any previous archdiocesan catechist formation; how do I get started?**

The first step is to discuss this with your parish catechetical leader or Catholic school principal, as he or she may have specific instructions for you. Once you have that conversation, you can get started here: [formedcatholiconline.com](https://formedcatholiconline.com). You will begin in Level I.

### **When I visit [formedcatholiconline.com](https://formedcatholiconline.com) there are three options: Catechist Certification, Teacher Certification and Online Electives. Which one should I choose?**

Please choose Catechist Certification if you will be receiving certification as a parish catechist. If you will be receiving certification under a Catholic school, please choose Teacher Certification. Online electives are electives for any parish catechist in Level III. Online electives are also open to anyone else wanting to learn more about the Catholic faith.

### **Is there a difference between Catechist Certification and Teacher Certification?**

Catechist Certification and Teacher Certification will yield the same type of archdiocesan catechist certificate. The main difference is that parish catechists need to complete the Level I Methodology sessions onsite, while Catholic school participants complete a ministerial course online.

### **If I took one Fostering Faith course or one pillar, which level will I start with?**

You will start with Level I, Answering the Call.

### **If I took two to four Fostering Faith courses or two to three pillars, which level will I start with?**

You will start with Level II, Witnessing the Call.

### **I took the five Fostering Faith courses, or the four pillars, and am a certified catechist. Which level will I start with?**

You will start in Level III, Inspiring the Call.

### **We're ready to get started with online formation.**

Catechetical leaders, please fill out the downloadable [Catechist Registration Form](#). The Certification Team will use this information to create accounts for your catechists.

Once the Office of Lifelong Formation receives your form, please allow up to 10 business days for processing the information. Emails with login information will be sent to registered catechists and teachers from [admin@formedcatholiconline.com](mailto:admin@formedcatholiconline.com).

## Catechetical Leaders FAQs

### **We're ready to get started with online formation. How do I create accounts for my parish catechists?**

Catechetical leaders, please fill out the downloadable [Catechist Registration Form](#). The Certification Team will use this information to create accounts for your catechists.

Once the Office of Lifelong Formation receives your form, please allow up to 10 business days for processing the information. Emails with login information will be sent to registered catechists from [admin@formedcatholiconline.com](mailto:admin@formedcatholiconline.com).

### **We would like the parish to get billed for the online courses, how do we go about doing this?**

Once you send in your Excel form, it's best to let our office know at that time that you would like to be invoiced.

By requesting to be billed, the amount will be added to the archdiocesan monthly bill for all the courses in each level, unless otherwise noted.

For example, if you have a parish catechist in Level I, you will be charged for the Spiritual Formation course, the Theological Course and the Ministerial Formation I Course. If you have a parish catechist in Level II, you will be charged for the Spiritual and Theological Formation Courses. If you have a parish catechist in Level III, let us know how many online electives he/she will take and which online electives each catechist has selected from [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com).

Your parish will receive a quote from our office with the total cost for the parish catechists. Please sign the document, scan it and send it to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).

The quote amount will be in the parish's archdiocesan monthly bill. Submit payment by check and include the quote number. Please clearly indicate the amount that is being paid for Catechist Certification in the memo line on the check to ensure that payment is appropriately distributed.

Participants will receive access to courses within five to seven business days, upon receipt of payment by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

**As a catechetical leader, can I submit one scholarship form for all my catechists?**

No, the Office of Lifelong Formation needs one scholarship form per catechist.

**How do I document that my parish catechists attended the retreat on the formation website?**

Once the Certification Team receives the attendance sheet from the parish or school, credit will be given by the Office of Lifelong Formation to attendees.

Please send retreat attendance by email to [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) or regular mail to the Cardinal Meyer Center, 3525 South Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, IL 60653.

**How can the certification retreat be scheduled? Where is it hosted? Who facilitates it? What is the cost?**

Certification retreats can be scheduled using the [certification retreat form](#). When filling out the form, please indicate the location and address if your parish is hosting the retreat outside of your premises. The form provides the option of suggesting a retreat facilitator or requesting one. The Office of Lifelong Formation will be happy to assist you in finding an experienced and approved certification retreat facilitator. For both options, we provide the outline and suggested material for the retreat. The suggested retreat facilitator needs to contact us so we can provide the material.

The cost per person is \$25.00 with a minimum number of 25 participants that includes the facilitator's stipend and the administrative fee. It is highly recommended to partner with other sites in your area if your group is less than 25 people. If the parish suggests their own retreat facilitator, the cost per participant is \$6.00 (administrative fee) for parish catechists. The parish is responsible for covering the facilitator's stipend.

## General FAQs

**What is a Level III Elective Package?**

A Level III elective package (found under "Teacher Certification" at [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com)) is a package made up of seven online electives, which count as seven sessions towards Level III. These elective packages should only be taken by Catholic school participants. Parish catechists may take electives for Level III [here](#).

**Will onsite courses be available for parish catechists?**

Yes, onsite courses will be available as parishes request to host them.

**What consists of Level I – Answering the Call?**

Level I – Answering the Call consists of the following requirements:

For parish catechists:

- Spiritual Formation I Course (three sessions)
- Theological Formation I Course (12 sessions)
- Ministerial Formation I Course (seven sessions)
- Methodology I Course (three sessions)
- Retreat

For Catholic school teachers:

- Spiritual Formation I Course (three sessions)
- Theological Formation I Course (12 sessions)
- Ministry Formation I Course (10 sessions, includes Methodology portion)
- Retreat

**Is there a specific time frame under which I need to complete Level I?**

For parish catechists, we recommend completing Level I within a year.

**What consists of Level II – Witnessing the Call?**

Level II – Witnessing the Call consists of the following:

- Spiritual Formation II Course (five sessions)
- Theological Formation II Course (12 sessions)
- Ministry Formation II Course (five sessions)
- Ministry Elective Sessions (eight sessions)
- Retreat

**Is there a specific time frame under which I need to complete Level II?**

For parish catechists, we recommend completing Level II within two years, but not within less than a year.

The requirements for parish catechists are divided by:

Level II – Year 1

- Spiritual Formation II Course
- Theological Formation II Course

Level II – Year 2

- Ministry Formation II Course
- Ministry Elective Sessions
- The retreat may be completed in either the first or second year of Level II

**What consists of Level III – Inspiring the Call?**

Level III – Inspiring the Call consists of the following requirements:

- 45 total elective sessions
- Retreat



### **Is there a specific time frame under which I need to complete Level III?**

Level III is a three-year renewal cycle, and parish catechists have to complete 15 elective sessions each year.

The requirements for Level III parish catechists are divided yearly by:

#### **Level III – Year 1**

- 15 sessions (may be completed through onsite electives and/or online electives)

#### **Level III – Year 2**

- 15 sessions (may be completed through onsite electives and/or online electives)

#### **Level III – Year 3**

- 15 sessions (may be completed through onsite electives and/or online electives)
- Retreat may be completed in any of the three years

### **Are scholarships available?**

Yes, scholarships are available for parish catechists in Level I and Level II – Year 1 and applications can be found here in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

### **Are there certain criteria to apply for scholarships?**

Currently, there is no specific criteria for parish catechists. Scholarship funds are limited and intended to support parishes in need. These scholarship funds are distributed based on availability. For more information, please contact [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).

### **As a Level II – Year 2 or Level III catechist, can I count the certification retreat approved by the Office of Lifelong Formation as part of my elective sessions?**

No, the certification retreat is an additional requirement for the level and will not count as part of your elective sessions.

### **What are ministry elective sessions? Can you provide some examples?**

Ministry Elective Sessions are sessions to be completed in addition to those found on [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com). These sessions are considered electives because each catechist is able to choose from a variety of options depending on one's own interests.

Examples include:

- Webinars
- In-services
- Bible studies
- Parish retreats/missions
- Day of reflections at parishes or schools
- Professional development days
- Ministerial trainings
- Any faith-based formation experience

### **What exactly is a session?**

A session is equivalent to one full hour of content (breaks and lunch times do not count as content time).

### **Do you recommend any webinars for my Ministry Elective Sessions?**

The Archdiocese of Chicago has a great relationship with a variety of publishers and a couple of them have upcoming webinars and pre-recorded webinars on their webpage:

- [Sadlier Religion](#)
- [OSV Recordings](#)
- [OSV Webcasts](#)
- [Ave Maria Press](#)

Other organizations:

- [Catholic Apostolate Center](#)
- [National Catholic Educational Association](#)
- [USCCB Leadership Institute](#)

### **What should I do if I'm uncertain about something counting as credit for my ministry elective sessions?**

Ask your catechetical leader if he or she approves it for you. The Office of Lifelong Formation entrusts catechetical leaders with their approval of Ministry Elective Sessions.

You can also email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) with the appropriate information and someone from the Certification Team will get back to you.

### **Once I upload my ministry elective form, will I receive an email stating that it has been received?**

You will not receive an email stating that it has been received. The Certification Team will review the approval request and will either approve or decline it depending on the information provided on the form. You can go back to your certifications page and check the status of the approval request.

### **How do I keep record of my ministry elective sessions?**

Download the [Level II and Level III elective form](#) from your online account. It is available once you log into your dashboard, under the notifications area.

Save the document onto your computer with no special characters. The system does not allow files named with special characters to be uploaded.

Fill out the document, and once you've completed the necessary ministry elective sessions for your level, upload it onto your account following the instructions listed out on the form.

### **I am having problems uploading the form, what can I do?**

Email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will assist you.

### **As a parish catechist in Level III, can I complete one of the elective packages found under the Teacher Certification track?**

No, however, the individual elective sessions found under these elective packages are can be found [here](#).

### **I noticed on my dashboard that I have a course called "Introduction to the Life of Prayer", which I do not recall purchasing or asking for access. Why do I have it and do I have to complete it?**

The session "Introduction to the Life of Prayer" was given to the Archdiocese of Chicago as a free preview of the online program during the 2015 Catechetical Gathering. You do not have to complete it.

**I am not seeking catechist certification, but I am enthusiastic to learn more about the Catholic faith. What can I do?**

The formation elements included in the certification process are suitable for any person seeking more knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. You can find all the sessions in the online store, [here](#), or you can contact us at [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) for more information.

## **System Technical FAQs**

**I do not recall if I have an account with [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com), what do I do?**

Email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will help you.

**My account has been locked, what do I do?**

The Certification Team checks locked users twice during office hours. Your account will be reactivated, and you will receive a login email with your new password from [admin@formedcatholiconline.com](mailto:admin@formedcatholiconline.com).

If you do not receive an email within a day, please email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org).

**Can someone send me my username and password to log onto [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com)?**

Please email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) with your request.

**I tried logging in with the provided username and password, but I keep getting a message saying, “Your username is invalid in the site”. What do I do?**

Please email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will help you. Our office will contact the online provider to resolve the issue.

**My parish has already paid for my coursework, however when I go to [formedcatholiconline.com](http://formedcatholiconline.com), I am asked to enter my credit card information in order to purchase the courses. What do I do?**

If your parish/school has already paid your coursework, the courses will already be loaded into your account. Login to your account, go to the “Learn” tab and begin your courses.

Access to your coursework will be confirmed once you receive an email from [admin@formedcatholiconline.com](mailto:admin@formedcatholiconline.com) providing you with your login credentials.

**I completed the entire session, but it is still showing incomplete. What do I do?**

Usually when this happens, either the pre- or post-assessment did not submit properly. Go into the session, click on the “Menu” button, click on pre-assessment, complete it and submit your answers. You can then go back and check if the session is now showing 100 percent. If not, please go back into the session and submit your answers to the post-assessment.

Afterwards, if it's still showing as incomplete, please email [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will assist you. Your password may have to be reset for someone from the team to go into your account and fix the issue.

**As I am finishing up a session within a course, I keep pressing the return button, but nothing happens. What do I do?**

If this happens, click on the “Return to Course” button right below the Archdiocese of Chicago logo on the top left corner, it will take you to the list of the sessions in the course.



**As I am checking my Level I certification, I notice I have three different certifications: Catechist Certification, Teacher Certification, and Pilot Certification. Do I need to complete all of them, or does only one apply to me?**

If you are a parish catechist, you only need to complete the requirements under the certification titled, “Catechist Certification - Level I - Answering the Call”.

If you are a Catholic school participant, you only need to complete the requirements under the certification titled, “Teacher Certification - Level I - Answering the Call”.

If you were part of the pilot program from February to July 2016, you only need to show completion under the certification titled, “Level I - Answering the Call - Pilot Certification”.

**As I am checking my Level II certification, I notice I have two different certifications, one titled Catechist Certification and the other titled Teacher Certification. Do I need to complete both, or does only one apply to me?**

If you are a parish catechist, you only need to complete the requirements under the certification titled, “Catechist Certification - Level II - Witnessing the Call”.

If you are a Catholic school participant, you only need to complete the requirements under the certification titled, “Teacher Certification - Level II - Witnessing the Call”.

**I had previously logged into my account and was able to see my courses. Now when I log in, I do not see any of my courses. What should I do?**

Recommendation from the online provider: Clear the computer’s cookies and cache by clicking on the three horizontal lines in the upper right corner (under the X) of the internet page and go into History. Once you’re there click, the “clear browsing data” button, make sure cookies and cached images and files are checked, then click “clear browsing data” at the bottom of the box. Please note, these steps are for Google Chrome and may be a different process for other browsers.

Need more help? Please contact [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will assist you. Your password may have to be reset in order for someone from the team to go into your account and fix the issue.

**When I go to the Learn page, there is no “Begin” or “Continue” button next to any of the courses. What should I do?**

Recommendation from the online provider: Clear the computer’s cookies and cache by clicking on the three horizontal lines in the upper right corner (under the X) of the internet page and go into History. Once you’re there click, the “clear browsing data” button, make sure cookies and cached images and files are checked, then click “clear browsing data” at the bottom of the box. Please note, these steps are for Google Chrome and may be a different process for other browsers.

Need more help? Please contact [certification@archchicago.org](mailto:certification@archchicago.org) and someone from the Certification Team will assist you. Your password may have to be reset in order for someone from the team to go into your account and fix the issue.

**I accidentally archived a course; how can I unarchive it?**

Go to your “Learn” page, and under the list of your courses, click on the button that says, “View Archived Courses”. From there, you will see the course that you archived, and next to it, click on the “Unarchive Course” button. It will unarchive the course and make it available to you on your Learn page.

**How do I archive a course?**

Go to your “Learn” page and click on the course that you would like to archive. Once you’re inside the course, you will see an “Archive Course” button below the name of the session, or below the list of sessions. Click on it. A pop-up warning will appear asking if you are sure you want to archive the course. Click “OK” and the system will archive it.

**Should I archive a course?**

We recommend archiving a course once you’re completely done with a level.

**How can I change my password?**

Once you log in to your account, on the top right corner, click on your name and then click on “Settings”. Under the password heading, enter a new password (must be between seven and 20 characters, have at least two letters and one number, and contain at least one special symbol). Enter the same password next to “Confirm Password”, choose your security question and answer, and click on “Save” to activate your new password.

**How can I change my name and/or my username (email address)?**

Once you log in to your account, on the top right corner, click on your name and then click on “Settings”. Under the “My Account” heading, make the appropriate changes and click on “Save” to save all of your changes.

**How can I add a user picture to my account?**

Once you log into your account, on the top right corner, click on your name and then click on “My Profile”. From there, click on the link that says, “Upload User Picture”. A pop-up box will appear, click on “Select files” and find the picture you want, click on “Open” and then “Upload files”. Close the pop-up box and your user picture will be added.

**How do I know if my device is compatible with the online program?**

Login to your account using your device. On the top right corner, click on your name and then click on “System Check”. The system will check if your device is compatible with the program.

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# APPENDIX

## Forms

Instructor File Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

Level I Live Event Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

Level II Live Event Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

Parish Request for Retreat Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

Level I Attendance Forms ([Fillable PDF](#))

- Level I Spiritual Formation I ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Theological Formation I Part I Revelation ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Theological Formation I Part II Profession of Faith – Creed ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Theological Formation I Part III Liturgy of the Church ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Theological Formation I Part IV Life in Christ ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Ministry Formation I – Ministerial ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Ministry Formation I – Biblical Methodology ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level I Methodology I – Catechetical Methods ([Fillable PDF](#))

Level II Attendance Forms ([Fillable PDF](#))

- Level II Spiritual Formation II ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level II Theological Formation II Part I Revelation ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level II Theological Formation II Part II Profession of Faith – Creed ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level II Theological Formation II Part III Liturgy of the Church ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level II Theological Formation II Part IV Life in Christ ([Fillable PDF](#))
- Level II Methodology II ([Fillable PDF](#))

Certification Retreat Attendance Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

Level II and III Parish Elective Form ([Fillable PDF](#))

2018–19 Scholarship Request Form ([English Fillable PDF](#)) ([Spanish Fillable PDF](#))