

**DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT**

**Parish Catechist Formation Guides**



## Parish Catechist Formation Guides

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## The Call to Catechize

**We ought, therefore, to do all that lies in our power to maintain  
the teaching of Christian doctrine with full vigor,  
and where such is neglected, to restore it;  
for in the words of Our Predecessor, Benedict XIV,  
"There is nothing more effective than catechetical instruction  
to spread the glory of God and to secure the salvation of souls."**

*Pius X, Acerbo Nimis, 17*

## Catechists

Catechists are called by Christ to teach the faith in a classroom setting in either a school or parish faith formation program; they may be paid or volunteer.

In addition to providing religious instruction, the catechist nurtures the seeds of faith imparted at Baptism so the Christian may bear great fruit. Catechesis forms the whole person, so they may know God and how to respond to His great Love with faith, hope, and charity. From first evangelization, through initiation, to lifelong discipleship, catechesis provides the sure foundation for the Christian life. Catechists accompany their students, helping them to live and bear witness to the faith in the world, preparing them for their eternal reward.

## Diocesan Policies and Guidelines

Catechists must be “practicing Catholics with a thorough knowledge of the Christian message and the ability to communicate it completely, faithfully, and enthusiastically; they should also meet diocesan standards as a catechist” (NDC 54, Ch. 8, p. 232).

All Catechists must:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church;
- Be 18 years or older
- Be in full compliance with the Office for the Protection of Children before beginning and while serving in ministry;
- Be committed to present and witness to the authentic teachings of the Church, and sign an Oath of Fidelity; and
- Be willing to continue their ministry training.

All catechists must strive to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to communicate the faith effectively. They must have a solid understanding of Catholic doctrine and worship, Scripture and Tradition, and Church history. Catechists must have the necessary communication skills and ability to use various methodologies with their students; they must understand how people grow and mature, and how persons of different ages and circumstances learn.

Catechists must continue their faith formation (e.g., Scripture, Catechism, Church history, etc.), as well as training in faith development, learning styles, teaching methods, and ministry-specific catechesis (e.g., teaching children with special learning needs, etc.).

## Catechist Training

Directors of Religious Education must make it a priority to equip their catechists with the training to effectively teach and share the faith with their students. Catechist training will nurture the faith of the catechist, and teach them to impart this faith to their students effectively. With a solid foundation in Church teaching, catechists may teach beyond the classroom materials and more confidently engage students.

There are many benefits to catechist training, the foremost being better formed Catholics. Where catechist training occurs universally and systematically, cohesion in the catechetical program and unity among catechists is evident. Furthermore, catechists who commit to ongoing training bring stability to parish programs and long-term service to the ministry.

The Diocese of Shreveport will provide local and diocesan workshops, institutes, conferences, and online (internet-based) classes to assist catechists in attaining appropriate training. The diocese has partnered with the Catechetical Institute: Franciscan at Home for online training for catechists and catechetical leaders and Loyola University New Orleans Online for Continuing formation.

## Catechist Formation

**“No matter what natural facility a person may have in ideas and language, let him always remember that he will never be able to teach Christian doctrine to children or to adults without first giving himself to very careful study and preparation.”**

*Pius X, Acerbo Nimis, 26*



Directors of Religious Education have a responsibility to make catechist training known and available through either online or onsite training opportunities.

- Who Needs to be Engaged in the diocesan Catechist Formation Program in the Parish?
- All catechists for grades K-12, adult formation catechists, and OCIA catechists
- The Parish Catechetical Leader (Director/Coordinator of Religious Education)

When does “Certification” (Initial Formation & Catechist Track ) Need to be Achieved?

- While we have moved away from a “certification” model for formation, all individuals must complete their Initial Formation & Catechist Track within 3 years of becoming a catechist

**Workshops:** Initial Formation

Scripture: The Heart of Catechesis

Sacred Scripture: The Big Picture

\*Workshop descriptions and all other catechist formation information can be found online at:  
<https://franciscanathome.com/diocese-shreveport>.

### **ONGOING FORMATION**

Upon completion of Initial Formation, it is beneficial for catechists/leaders is that annually they will all engage in the following (regardless of degree status):

One formation workshop offered through Franciscan at Home

AND

One other formation experience of a person’s choosing (e.g., a retreat, webinar, spiritual reading, Christian service/outreach, catechetical conference).

- When you engage in any of these other formation opportunities of your choosing, we ask that you complete a brief description of your experience and give to your Director Religious Education.

## Basic Catechist Formation

Basic Catechist Formation is strongly encouraged for every catechist in the Diocese of Shreveport. It is designed to recognize catechists with a sound foundation in faith as well as the resources and training necessary to teach.



*Franciscan University of Steubenville Catechetical Institute*

[www.catechetics.com](http://www.catechetics.com)

Here through a partnership with the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University catechists, catholic school teachers, youth minister, OCIA team members, and members of families can gain free and unlimited access to the Catechetical Institute's many resources available for continuing education, professional development, ongoing formation and spiritual enrichment.



The Diocese of Shreveport recommends Loyola University New Orleans for Continuing Education Online for Religious Education.



The Diocese of Shreveport recommends NCCL for further professional development.



The Diocese of Shreveport recommends NALM for further professional development.

# Director of Religious Education Training

## Director of Religious Education (DRE)

The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained Director of Religious Education. The DRE instills heart and wisdom into the structured parish catechetical program. The DRE works closely with the pastor and the Office of Faith Formation to build a program that aligns with Diocesan Policies and Guides; they also implement this program with pastoral care for both the catechists and students in the program. With an eye to the eternal, the DRE works to proclaim the Word of God through evangelization and catechesis. Discerning the formation needs of the parish and prayerfully realizing them, the DRE nurtures the faith of parishioners through word and witness.

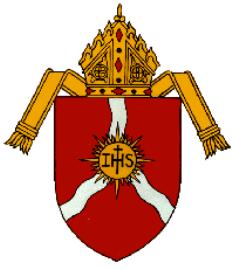
## Diocesan Policies and Guidelines

Directors of Religious Education must possess the necessary personal qualities, catechetical understanding and skills, organizational and administrative abilities, academic preparation, and professional experience to direct the entire faith formation program of the parish. They must be able to recruit volunteers and provide catechist training, select curriculum resources, provide program design for all age levels, and manage and supervise staff (both paid and volunteer).

Only fully initiated, practicing Catholics who fully adhere to the Church's teaching on faith and morals and who are models of Christian virtue and courageous witnesses to the Catholic faith should be designated as parish catechetical leaders.

The following are the required qualifications for a Director of Religious Education:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing;
- Have the skills necessary to effectively fulfill this position, including but not limited to catechetical expertise, leadership and team-building skills, and relational skills that bear witness to the love of Christ;
- **A Master's degree in Religious Education, Theology or related field is preferred not required.**
- Be willing to continue professional development in areas that will benefit the faith formation program of the parish;
- Be willing to work with the Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Shreveport, and to implement a unified accredited faith formation program in the local community;
- Be willing to serve and build up the faith formation program in the parish, including the school and homeschool communities, so to bring the Good News to all who live within the parish boundaries;
- Ensure the formation of catechists, who are called to share in this ministry;
- Coordinate various faith formation programs and ministries, supervising other lay faith formation employees (e.g., Adult Faith Formation Minister, High School Faith Formation Minister, etc.); and Follow all guidelines and requirements established by the Diocese of Shreveport, and reviewed regularly by the pastor.



**Diocese of Shreveport  
Office of Faith Formation**

**Catechist Oath of Fidelity**

I, N., with firm faith hereby profess:

I believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only  
begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all  
ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God  
from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. Through him  
all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down  
from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became  
man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered  
death and was buried,

And rose again on the third day in accordance  
with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his  
kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds  
from the Father and the Son.

Who, with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, Who has  
spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the  
resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Therefore, I believe and profess all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. I  
promise to teach sincerely and fully, through both my words and actions, this same faith to those entrusted to my care.  
Amen.

Catechist Signature

Printed Name

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRE Signature

Printed Name

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor

Print

Date: \_\_\_\_\_