

Sharing the Way

The Certificate Program for Volunteer Catechists

In the Diocese of Colorado Springs

Revised May 2007

This Certificate Program has been developed for the volunteer catechists involved in parish formation programs and teachers of religion in Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Colorado Springs. This includes:

- Sacramental Preparation Programs
- Preschool and Elementary Religious
- Education Programs
- Religious Education in the Catholic Schools
- Middle School and Youth Ministry
- Adult Formation Classes
- The RCIA Process

In an effort to promote and provide quality lifelong formation to the faithful, we recognize the importance of educating and supporting our volunteer catechists in their ministries. The program for Basic Certification utilizes the *Echoes of Faith* series, developed and sponsored by NCCL and produced by Tabor Publishing/RCL. This is a video-assisted resource that familiarizes the catechist with the foundations of Catholic doctrine and tradition and summarizes for them the principles of sound catechetical theory. The Diocesan Resource Center has three sets of this program, including one Spanish language set, for parish use.

The program is divided into three sections. The first section includes classes in:

- Getting Started as a Catechist
- The Roles of the Catechist
- The Person of the catechist
- Introduction to the Learner

The Theological classes include:

- I Believe/We Believe
- Liturgy and Sacraments
- Introduction to the Scriptures
- Prayer and Spirituality
- Catholic Morality

The Methodology classes are age appropriate sessions that help the catechist understand the age level they are teaching and suggest methods and activities to help them in the classroom.

In addition to the classes, catechists must attend one Spiritual Retreat a year.

The requirement for Basic Certification will be 30 classroom hours divided into 6 classroom hours of basic catechetical instruction, 20 classroom hours of theology and 4 classroom hours of methodology.

Once Basic Catechetical Certification is achieved, there will be an annual requirement of 10 continuing education hours, 6 of which must be in Theology, and one spiritual retreat per year to maintain certification.

Intermediate Catechetical Certification is achieved with the completion of an additional 20 hours of continuing education (12 of which must be in Theology) over a consecutive two year period. This is in addition to the annual 10 hour continuing education requirement to maintain certification.

Advanced Catechetical Certification is achieved with the completion of another 20 hours of continuing education (12 of which must be in Theology) over a consecutive three year period. This is in addition to the annual 10 hour continuing education requirement to maintain certification.

While the diocese has adopted the *Echoes of Faith* series the Theology hours can be fulfilled at other diocesan or parish sponsored presentations. The presentations need to fall into one of the five categories of Basic Beliefs, Liturgy and Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, Prayer and Spirituality or Catholic Morality. The catechist attending the presentation is responsible for keeping records concerning the topic, presenter, place and hours and should check with their Director or Coordinator to make sure the presentation will count towards their certification.

Individual parishes or regions can utilize this program in ongoing sessions to provide formation to their catechists. Catechists wishing to become certified will be responsible for keeping and verifying their own records. When all requirements for the basic program have been met, the catechist must have their records approved by the Director or Coordinator of the formation program they are involved in. The Director or Coordinator will then keep the original records at the parish and send copies to the Office of Total Catholic Education at the Diocesan Catholic Pastoral Center to request certification for the catechist. The TCE will then approve and issue certificates back to the parish.

Booklets with space to record your classes and hours are available in the Parish Office.