



MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD CATHOLIC CHURCH

www.oviedocatholic.org

Discipleship & Faith Formation

Catechist Handbook

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Discipleship and Faith Formation

*helps our community to hear and respond to Jesus' call
to "Come, Follow Me" as his disciples.*

What is a catechist?

A baptized man or woman who has responded to God's call (vocation) to build up His kingdom specifically through catechesis.

By the witness of his/her life, he/she leads others to encounter the Person of Jesus Christ and become His disciple.

Pope Francis' Address to Catechists on September 27, 2013

"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. Remember what Benedict XVI said: "The Church does not grow by proselytizing; she grows by attracting others" And what attracts is our witness. Being a catechist means witnessing to the faith, being consistent in our personal life."

What is catechesis?

The stage of evangelization that brings initial faith in Jesus Christ to maturity. It is an ongoing formation in the life of discipleship.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 4

"Quite early on, the name *catechesis* was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ."

General Directory for Catechesis, 82

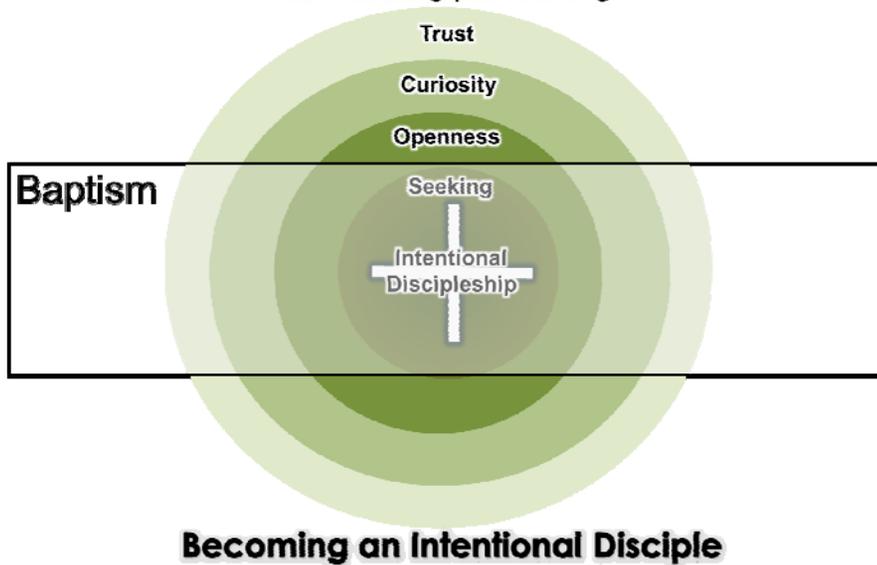
"Catechesis is that particular form of the ministry of the word which matures initial conversion to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith..."

On Catechesis in Our Time, 20

"...within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself..."

Moving to the Lord - Thresholds

Non- Believing | Non-Trusting



Becoming an Intentional Disciple

Fundamental tasks of catechesis

There are six interrelated tasks of catechesis through which disciples are brought to spiritual maturity:

1. Promote knowledge of the faith
2. Liturgical education and formation
3. Moral formation in Jesus Christ
4. Teaching to pray
5. Formation in active community life and mission
6. Missionary initiation

National Directory for Catechesis, 20

“These six tasks of catechesis constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Formation for Catechists

Catechists must continue in their own formation as disciples of Jesus Christ. Formation for catechists aims to grow competence across four dimensions:

- Catechist** The human and spiritual development of the catechist.
- Content** The intellectual understanding of and adherence to the teachings of the Church.
- Learner** Understanding the audience so that catechesis might bear much fruit.
- Methods** The catechetical skills and techniques to faithfully hand on the art of Christian living.

The Diocese of Orlando offers multiple opportunities for catechetical formation through the Diocesan Catechist Certification Program (DCCP), University of Dayton online learning, and other partnerships.

All catechists of Most Precious Blood are expected to participate in at least one formation opportunity, in addition to what the parish offers for catechist formation. More information will be provided.

Practical points for Most Precious Blood Catechists

I. Maintain a healthy spiritual life

- ◆ Your fruitfulness as a catechist depends on your attachment to the Vine (see John 15:5).
- ◆ Participate in weekly Sunday Eucharist, daily prayer and Scripture meditation, and regular Reconciliation.
- ◆ Participate in an Adult Formation study offered by the parish.

II. Prepare your lesson well

- ◆ Pray for each student to encounter Jesus Christ through you and in your lesson.
- ◆ Study and plan in prayer. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide your preparation and the lesson.

- ◆ Be prepared to share what God has done and is doing in your life as you move closer to Him (see 1 Peter 3:15).
- ◆ Follow the provided lesson schedule.
- ◆ Utilize the catechist guide and online resources as found on: aliveinchrist.osv.com. (grades 1-6) or www.faithfusion.com (grade 7).
- ◆ Incorporate activities for multiple learning styles.

III. Know your class

- ◆ Understand the thresholds of conversion and how to help someone progress in their interior spiritual journey with Jesus Christ.
- ◆ “Read” where a child/youth is in their relationship with Jesus.
- ◆ Understand the “spiritual climate” of your group, meet them there, and move them toward the Lord.
- ◆ Students with special needs are welcome to participate in our classes. If there is a child/youth with special needs in your class, you will be notified and given any specific instructions to meet their unique needs.

IV. Communicate with the parents on a regular basis

- ◆ Send home the “Faith + Family” pages at the end of each session.
- ◆ Available modes of communication: email, Remind101, etc.
- ◆ Blind copy all email recipients (Diocese of Orlando privacy policy).
- ◆ Copy John Molloy (jmolloy@oviedocatholic.org) on all communications to the families.

V. Coordinate any needs with the office

- ◆ Copies—You may come into the office and use the copier or email them by 5:00pm on the Monday prior to class with any specifications (number of copies, paper color, etc.).
- ◆ Special craft supplies— please submit at least 1 week before the class that you will require them.
- ◆ Substitutes—As soon as you know that you are unable to teach on a given week, please notify John or Chris as soon as you can so that a substitute may be found.

VI. Arrive early

- ◆ Pick up your catechist folder from the Narthex. It has the attendance sheet, sign out sheet, and anything that may need to be distributed to the class.
- ◆ Greet all children/youth in your designated sitting area in the Parish Life Center. Sit with them and monitor them during the general session.
- ◆ Classes will be dismissed one-by-one at the end of the general session. Escort your group to your assigned classroom and begin your lesson.
- ◆ The rooms will be locked for the duration of the Faith Formation period. Do not open the door for anyone, even if someone is knocking. Faith Formation helpers will have keys.
- ◆ If there are any late arrivals, they will check in at the Narthex and be escorted to your room. Do not open the door.

VII. Maintain order

- ◆ Distribute and use the student books during your session. At the end of the session, gather them and put them away.
- ◆ Note attendance **legibly and accurately** on the provided sheet in your catechist folder. (P or √ = Present; A or X = Absent)
- ◆ If there are any discipline issues, give a warning to the child/youth.
- ◆ If the issue persists, the child/youth should be handed over to John who will address the issue and notify parents of the behavior, if needed.
- ◆ If the issue still continues, John will meet with the parents to arrive at a solution. The child may be dismissed from the weekly Faith Formation sessions.

VIII. Dismiss on time

- ◆ Be conscious of the ending time and open your door at the designated ending time.
- ◆ All children (grades 1-8) must be signed out by an adult. Sign out sheets are provided.
- ◆ Children may not be signed out by siblings, unless it is an older sibling who is driving. You may check an ID if you are unsure.

- ◆ You will be notified if there are any children who will be walking or biking home. Parents must have already cleared it with John prior to the class period. We **STRONGLY** discourage it.
- ◆ If there are any children/youth still waiting to be picked up when you are ready to leave, escort them to the Narthex where they can continue to wait until their parent arrives to sign them out.

Other important notes

Creating a Safe Environment

All volunteers 15 years and older who have access to children **MUST** go through the Diocesan-mandated *Safe Environment* process. Therefore, only authorized adults may enter the classrooms during Faith Formation sessions. In addition, the Diocese of Orlando mandates that the “Learning about L.I.F.E” program be presented to all children and families during the year. All catechists should go through the online training in preparation to assist in the presentation to their class. If there are any issues, please contact John. The date of Most Precious Blood’s lesson will be provided on the lesson schedule.

Cancellations

If there are any cancellations due to serious weather conditions or any other concerns, the parish website (www.oviedocatholic.org) will be updated with a cancellation notice and catechists and families will be informed.

Emergency procedures and drills

All families will have an emergency contact card on file. In the event of sickness, behavior, or other issues, John or Chris will reach out to the emergency contact.

If there is an on-campus emergency during Faith Formation, we will notify the classrooms and issue instructions. Classes in the five portables will be notified via the phone located on the back wall of each room.

If an issue arises in a PLC classroom, an assistant or helper can be sent to the Narthex for assistance.

If an issue arises in a portable classroom, **call 134** from the room phone for assistance.

During the year, there will be an emergency procedure drill. Catechists will be notified and given instructions ahead of the drill. Families will be notified in advance of the day and type of drill to be performed.

Overall Communications

General communication for Faith Formation will be done electronically through email or “myparish app” (which can be downloaded on Apple or Android smartphones; see the video tutorial on the parish website).

Email blasts will be sent out to all catechists when and if there is any important information of which to be aware.

Families will receive an electronic newsletter with relevant information and important dates.

Snacks/parties

As a general rule, please do not have snacks during the Faith Formation sessions. In addition to the limited time that we have for each session, there are some of the children/youth who have life-threatening food allergies. At the end of the year there will be an opportunity for a celebration, which should be moderate.

Application to prepare for Sacraments

Parents have the God-given responsibility to present their children for preparations to receive Confirmation and/or Eucharist. In an effort to assist parents discern whether their child/youth is ready to enter a time of preparation, there will be an application form that must be submitted in order to join the preparation process. No child is automatically enrolled due to age, grade, or length of time in the Faith Formation program.

Preparation for the sacraments of Confirmation and/or Eucharist is done separately from ongoing formation, and is grounded in it.

Catechists of all grades must not presume that their entire class has received or is preparing to receive a sacrament.

Becoming a catechist at Most Precious Blood

- ◆ Fill out the Catechist Application Form and return to John Molloy (jmolloy@oviedocatholic.org).
- ◆ John will contact you to set up an interview time.
- ◆ Contact Lillian Izaguirre (lizaguirre@oviedocatholic.org) to begin the Safe Environment process.
- ◆ Attend a Catechist Orientation.
- ◆ Participate in ongoing formation throughout the year.