



GUIDELINES FOR OBTAINING THE CALIFORNIA MASTER CATECHIST CERTIFICATE AND ITS RENEWAL

DIOCESE OF OAKLAND



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”

Matthew 28:19

DIOCESE OF OAKLAND
DEPARTMENT FOR EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS
DIOCESAN POLICY FOR MASTER CATECHIST FORMATION & CERTIFICATION
2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PURPOSE_____	p 3
II.	INTRODUCTION_____	p 3
	A.) The Bishop’s Office and the Role of the Master Catechist_____	p 3
	B.) Qualifications of a Master Catechist_____	p 4
	C.) Diocesan Responsibility_____	p 4
	D.) Responsibility of the Department for Evangelization and Catechesis_____	p 4
III.	STANDARDS FOR CALIFORNIA MASTER CATECHIST CERTIFICATION_	p 5
	A.) Basic Certification and the School for Pastoral Ministry_____	p 5
	B.) Master Catechist Specialization_____	p 7
IV.	PROCESS FOR MASTER CATECHIST CERTIFICATION_____	p 8
	A.) The Application Process_____	p 8
	B.) Program of Studies_____	p 8
	C.) Assessments_____	p 9
	D.) Alternative Means of Certification_____	p 9
	E.) Expiration and Renewal_____	p 10
V.	Catechetical Documents_____	p 11
VI.	Appendix A_____	p 12

I. PURPOSE

In order to promote effective catechesis and standardize the quality of the formation of catechists under their jurisdiction, the Bishops of the California Catholic Conference, in consultation with the Directors of Catechetical Ministry, the Superintendents of Catholic Schools, the Directors of Youth Ministry and the Directors of Adult Faith Formation of the Dioceses of the State of California, have agreed upon the parameters on which the following Guidelines for the Formation and Certification of Master Catechists are based.

The following guidelines outline the process and standards whereby a catechist can gain or renew the *California Master Catechist Certificate* within the Diocese of Oakland.

II. INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His Church to teach all nations (Mt. 28). Since then, the Catholic Church throughout the world, faithful to the Great Commission of the Lord, continues to evangelize and catechize the world in His name. Her teachings are His own. Building on the work of the Second Vatican Council, the *General Directory for Catechesis* stated that the Church needs to consider as its primary task the preparation and formation of catechists in the deep riches of the faith (no. 33). In the dioceses of the United States, formation programs should be designed to help catechists acquire the knowledge and skills needed to hand on the faith to those entrusted to their care and to assist them in living as disciples in Christ (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no. 55).

A.) The Bishop's Office and the Role of the Master Catechist. The Bishop of Oakland, as the chief catechist of the local church, provides for the catechesis of the Faithful so that their faith "becomes living, explicit and productive through formation in doctrine and the experience of Christian living" (*Code of Canon Law*, 773). Master Catechists, as extensions of the teaching office of the Bishop, are selected and commissioned by the Bishop to:

- 1.) Provide the specific formation and courses of studies and evaluations required by the diocese for catechists to obtain or renew a California Catechist Certificate;
- 2.) Provide workshops and in-services for the continued growth and formation of catechists and Catholic School teachers;
- 3.) Be willing to participate as a member of a catechetical leadership visioning team.

B.) Qualifications of a Master Catechist. The Church calls forth exemplary followers of Christ who have a living, conscious, active participation in the sacramental life of the Church, as well as proven catechetical leadership. The qualifications of a Master Catechist include:

- 1.) A current California Catechist Certificate;
- 2.) Proven expertise and recent experience in catechetical ministry at various age levels;
- 3.) An ability to communicate and work effectively with adult learners in a formation setting;
- 4.) The personal recommendation of the candidate's pastor or other catechetical leader;
- 5.) Evidence of ongoing education in: Theology, Catechesis, the teachings of the Church and Spiritual Development in light of Vatican II and post-conciliar documents.
- 6.) Evidence of the ability to work in multi-cultural situations;
- 7.) An understanding of the purpose of the Master Catechist and a willingness to serve as such when certified;
- 8.) An ability to study at an advanced level.

C.) Diocesan Responsibility. The vision of the Master Catechist Program of the Diocese of Oakland is to prepare Master Catechists who will bring the love of the Person, teachings, mission of Jesus and His Church to all with a joy that radiates from a disciple in communion with Him. The diocesan program seeks potential Master Catechists who desire to know Jesus and to make Him better known. Upon completing the program, a new Master Catechist will be able to hand on the Deposit of Faith in a manner that is authentic, systematic and organic.

To this end, the Bishop and/or his catechetical staff have the duty to:

- 1.) Select candidates and evaluate their potential to become Master Catechists;
- 2.) Certify candidates upon completion of the entire formation program for the Master Catechist;
- 3.) Orient, commission, supervise and evaluate Master Catechists;
- 4.) Provide Master Catechists with opportunities for continued personal, spiritual and professional development.

D.) Responsibility of the Department for Evangelization and Catechesis. In the Diocese of Oakland, the Department for Evangelization and Catechesis (DEC) is responsible for the Master Catechist application review process, candidacy, formation, commissioning, certification renewal, oversight of ongoing faith formation for the Master Catechist Community, and is accountable to the Bishop of Oakland. Particular norms and procedures not explicitly contained in general diocesan policy are subject to interpretation and implementation by DEC officials.

III. STANDARDS FOR CALIFORNIA MASTER CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

Overview of Course of Studies: Master Catechist Candidates will be well informed by the teachings of the Church and prepared for service in the worshipping community. The Master Catechist Program, following the six tasks of adult faith formation in *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, teaches for continual conversion, understanding of doctrine, and for witness of life to the Catholic faith (cf. *Catechesi Traedendae*, no. 20; *GDC* 53; *OHWB* 67-73).

Master Catechist Candidates study the same content offered in the Basic Catechist formation course, but with greater depth and breadth.

A.) Basic Catechist Certification and the School for Pastoral Ministry
After completing their Basic Catechist Certification, Candidates will deepen their knowledge of the following subjects through the St. Francis de Sales School for Pastoral Ministry.

The course of studies is consistent with the *General Directory for Catechesis*, *National Directory for Catechesis*, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, *Renewing the Vision*, and *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*.

1.) Tasks of Catechesis

a. Knowledge of the Faith

- Revelation/Faith
- Scripture
- Tradition
- The Creed
- Trinity and the Image of God
- Christology
- Ecclesiology
- Mary and the Saints
- Life Everlasting
- Church History

b. Liturgical Life

- The Paschal Mystery
- Sacramental Theology
- Liturgy
- Eucharist as Source and Summit
- Sacraments of Initiation
- Sacraments of Healing
- Sacraments at the Service of Communion

- c. **Moral Formation**
 - Dignity of the Human Person
 - Sin, Grace, Redemption
 - Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, the Beatitudes
 - Moral Principles
 - Conscience Formation, Moral Decision Making
 - Virtue and Gospel Values
 - Catholic Social Teaching
 - Life Long Conversion

- d. **Christian Prayer**
 - Prayer in the Christian Life
 - Spirituality
 - Prayer Forms
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - Leading Prayer

- e. **Communal Life**
 - Communal Character of Life in Christ - Households of Faith, Parish Communities
 - Apprenticeship in Christian Living
 - Ecumenical Dimension
 - Multicultural Reality
 - Safe Environments

- f. **Missionary Spirit**
 - Theology of Ministry
 - Evangelizing Spirit, New Evangelization
 - Discipleship
 - Call of Laity in Mission and Service in the World
 - Interreligious Dialogue

2.) Nature and Purpose of Catechesis

- Initiating and Ongoing Catechesis
- Catechumenate as Model and Inspiration
- Evangelizing Catechesis
- Inculturation
- Faith and Human Development
- Authentic Presentation of Christian Message
- History of Catechesis

3.) Methodology

- Divine Methodology
- Elements of Human Methodology
- Learning Styles, Teaching Styles
- Technology and Catechesis
- Resources

4.) Spiritual Development of the Master Catechist

The course of study should include opportunities and direction in personal spiritual development by integrating the following spiritual formation practices:

- Prayer (to include retreats and days of reflection) and spiritual practices
- Spiritual guidance
- Celebration of liturgical life.

B.) **Master Catechist Specialization:** The Master Catechist Course of study should include, but is not limited to the following:

1.) **Evangelization and Catechesis**

- Definition, Relationship and final End of Evangelization and Catechesis
- Christocentricity of the Gospel message
- Revelation and the Pedagogy of Faith
- Conversion and Moral Development

2.) **Thorough knowledge and use of Catechetical Principles**

- Ecclesial Nature of Catechesis
- Object and Aims of Catechesis
- Sources and Message of Catechesis
- Overview of Primary Catechetical Documents

3.) **Effective teaching methods**

- Teaching - Learning Process
- Learning Styles
- Catechumenal Model
- Lesson Planning
- Adult, Youth, and Child Psychological and Moral Development

4.) **Leadership and Supervisory Skills**

- Servant Leadership
- Communication and Public Speaking
- Goal-setting and Supervision Skills
- Management and Conflict Resolution

5.) **Curriculum Development and Text Selection**

- Textbook Selection
- Ten Common Doctrinal Deficiencies
- Curriculum Development and Adaptation
- Web based and other resources

6.) **Catechist Training and Spiritual Development**

- Elements of Catechists' Training
- Spiritual Development of Catechists

IV. PROCESS FOR MASTER CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

Those interested in pursuing Master Catechist Certification should apply for entrance into the Master Catechist Specialization. This is a one year program following completion of the St. Francis de Sales School for Pastoral Ministry (or its equivalent), and which requires a separate application.

A.) The Application Process

- 1.) **Inquiry:** Prospective Master Catechists should review the *Diocesan Policy for Master Catechist Formation and Certification* and discern whether they are spiritually and practically disposed to follow a rigorous formation and candidacy process. While one need not be proficient to perform at a Master Catechist level at the time of application, it is expected that by the end of the formation program, a newly certified and commissioned Master Catechist - as a representative of the Bishop and the Diocese - should be ready and able to hand on the Catholic faith in its fullness.
- 2.) **Submitting Documentation:** Prepare and gather information for the documents described in **Appendix A**.
- 3.) **Application Procedure**
 - a. **Application dates.** The diocese will receive applications for the Master Catechist program from August 1st to November 1st of every year.
 - b. **Review of Application.** Once an application and corresponding documents for Master Catechist candidacy are received, a notice confirming receipt of the application will be sent to the applicant. Missing items will delay the process.
 - c. **Interview.** Once all items have been submitted, the application will be reviewed to determine whether an interview will be offered. If an interview is offered, an appointment will be set up with an interview panel and the applicant.
 - d. **Response Letter.** Upon completion of the interview, the applicant will be sent a *Decision Notice for Applicant*.

B.) Program of Studies

- 1.) **Program Prerequisites:** In order to apply to the Master Catechist Specialization, the Candidate should have the following formation:
 - a. Basic Catechist Certification
 - b. Three years of formation through the St. Francis de Sales School for Pastoral Ministry (SPM) with a graduation date after 2010, or its equivalent. (Please refer to **Section III-A and Section IV-D**)

- 2.) **Master Catechist Specialization.** Every Master Catechist Candidate is required to complete one year of Master Catechist formation through the classes provided by the Diocese of Oakland regardless of their previous training. This year is referred to as the **Master Catechist Specialization.** (Please refer to Section III-B)

C.) Assessments

- 1.) **Supervision & Observation:** As candidates undergo their studies, they will be observed in at least two catechetical teaching sessions.
- 2.) **Areas of Proficiency:** The candidate must demonstrate proficiency in teaching for initial certification (i.e., Basic Catechist Certificate level courses) to adults in the following areas: Profession of Faith, Sacraments, Life in Christ, Christian Prayer, Catechetical Methodology, Community & Mission, and other support courses.

D.) Alternative Means of Certification

In lieu of completing the 3 years of formation with the St. Francis de Sales School for Pastoral Ministry and with a graduation date of 2010 and after, the Diocese of Oakland accepts the following:

- 1.) Completion within the last 5 years (normally) of a Masters Degree or Masters Certificate Program in Religious Studies, Catechesis or Theology, from a Catholic college or university, that reflects knowledge in the content areas delineated in Section III as well as proven experience in catechesis with adults.
-OR-
- 2.) Completion within the last 5 years of a Masters Degree (normally) in Education, with a minimum requirement of 12 additional graduate hours in Theology, Religious Studies or Religious Education.
-AND-
- 3.) Every Master Catechist Candidate is required to complete the Master Catechist Specialization through the classes provided by the Diocese of Oakland regardless of their previous training. (Please refer to Section III- B)

E.) Expiration and Renewal

- 1.) This certificate expires in 3 years after the date of issue. To renew this certificate, the Master Catechist must demonstrate a minimum of 30 hours every three years of ongoing professional growth based upon his/her previous and current evaluations.
- 2.) A Master Catechist may use DVD's and other mass media to maintain his or her renewal hours. Up to one-third of the hours may be fulfilled using DVD's and other mass media.
- 3.) Submit the Master Catechist Renewal Form in a timely manner.

CATECHETICAL DOCUMENTS

Primary Documents:

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, 1997
- *General Directory for Catechesis*, Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, USCC, 1997
- *Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in Our Time)*, Pope John Paul II, 1979

Secondary Documents:

- *National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, 2005
- *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* USCCB 1999
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World)*, Pope Paul VI, 1975
- *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* USCCB 1988
- *Guide for Catechists*, Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, USCC, 1993

Supporting Documents:

- *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, International Council for Catechesis, 1990.
- *Christifideles Laici (Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World)*, Pope John Paul II, 1988
- *Co Workers in the Vineyard*, USCCB, 2006
- *Dei Verbum (On Divine Revelation)*, Vatican II, 1965
- *Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry*, USCCB, 2002
- *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*, Vatican II, 1965
- *Go and Make Disciples (A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States)*, USCC, 1993
- *Maturing in Faith: The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*, National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 1986
- *Principles for Inculturation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, USCC, 1994
- *Redemptoris Missio (On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate)*, Pope John Paul II, 1991
- *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, USCCB, 2005
- *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, NCCB, 1997
- *Sin Fronteras (Without Borders)*, Comite Episcopal de Baja y Alta California, Sonora Arizona, 1994
- *To Teach As Jesus Did*, USCC, 1973
- *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* 1988
- *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, USCCB, 2006
- *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, USCC, 2000
- *Loving, Learning, Living Your Faith*, Orange diocese

Appendix A

MASTER CATECHIST APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- 1.) Complete the *Application Form for Master Catechist Certification*. Please list your experience in both catechesis and if applicable, lay ministry.
- This includes:
- *Short Answer Questionnaire Sheet*
 - *Learning Covenant*
 - *2 Recommendation Forms*
- 2.) Include *Curriculum Vitae*
- 3.) Submit a copy of your *California Catechist Certificate*. If no copy is available, the applicant should explain why it is not available and applying at this time.
- 4.) For those who hold college degrees, theological certificates, or Master Catechist certificates from other dioceses, please submit a copy of your transcript or certificate.