

CATECHIST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the new catechist program! We are excited to offer a new structure built to fit within the business of modern life. Quizzes and reflection papers are now a thing of the past, and travel has been cut to a minimum. Even the website has been streamlined for easier access to content. Our new program is a lean, mean, training machine! With that in mind, a quick overview can be found below. It should answer many of your questions. If you have more, don't hesitate to contact your local catechetical leader.

1. Getting Started

The first thing to do is sign up. If you're reading this, you've probably already found the website. Go to the main page and click on the "Getting Started" box. This will allow you to create a login (don't worry, it's all free). The site will ask you to choose a username and password. Once you're done, click on "Create my new account." That will send it up to the site administrator. You will get an email letting you know when your account is approved and you can get started.

Now that you're signed up, there are two ways to participate in the program. The preferred way is in small group meetings. Your catechetical leader will hold periodic meetings for you and your fellow catechists. Together, you will meet at your own parish or school to engage content and have discussions. If you follow this path you may rarely sign in again, but your leader will be able to update your account to show which courses you've completed.

The other path can be followed from home. You can login to the website on your own, engage the content, and participate in an online discussion. You can also use this option to catch up if you miss a group session.

2. Structure and Content

Once you have an account, you can get started by clicking the "Login" box on the main page. After entering your username and password, you will be taken to the "dashboard" page. From here you can access the content. Just look for the "My Courses" tab, which appears in several places on this page.

"My Courses" will show you all currently available courses. Material is still being added, and there will be seven courses in total. They follow the same model. Each is broken into thematic talks, a spiritual component, and short "teaching tips" presentations.

The thematic talks are subdivided into three parts. First is the talk itself, which typically spans 30–40 minutes. There is also a notes package, which provides a printable outline for the talk. Finally, there is the online discussion board paired to the talk. These boards are only for those participating at home.

The spiritual component of each course offers a description and/or experience of Catholic spirituality. Topics differ by course, ranging from the Rosary to a teaching mass. There are no discussion boards or notes packages attached to these spiritual components.

Finally, “teaching tips” segments feature local catechists giving their stories and providing walkthroughs for their best lessons. These presentations are short, typically lasting about 20 minutes. They are paired with discussion boards, but have no notes packages attached.

3. Getting Credit

Getting credit is easy. After every session your catechetical leader can go through the website and confirm who has finished a course (or segment). Once you’ve finished all seven courses, the chancery will issue your catechist certification. If you complete the program but will not be serving in a catechetical role, you will receive a certification of completion. Participants are expected to progress toward their certification at a steady pace. Consult your catechetical leader for details.

Not all participants will be starting from scratch. If you had participated in our previous program, fear not. You have lost nothing. That program had required 72 hours of structured participation to reach completion. Simply add the number of hours you had to the hours you’re obtaining through the new program. When the total hits 72, you’re finished.

If you had already finished our previous catechetical program, your certification holds. That certification came with an ongoing hours requirement of 18 every three years. Engaging in the new program is probably the easiest way to meet that requirement. Finally, certain persons (e.g. deacons) are exempt from certification, although they are encouraged to participate alongside their fellow catechists.

That’s it for now. Thank you for all your service to Christ and His Church. In many ways catechists are the lifeblood of the Church. We want to equip you for your task. This new program is a big part of that. God bless you, and let’s get started!