



in cooperation with the



Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership Overview 2024

The Office of Evangelization & Discipleship in cooperation with the Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) at the University of Dayton is offering a **Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership Program (AFL)** that is designed for adults in parish or diocesan ministry wishing to design, implement and facilitate adult learning and faith formation for all adults as Adult Faith Formation leaders/coordinators/catechists/facilitators in parishes or dioceses.

The AFL Program consists of eight (8) courses.

Courses
1. Our Hearts Were Burning within Us: Prerequisite Course*
2. Foundation and Vision of Adult Learning & Faith Formation
3. Parish as Learning Community
4. Many Faces of Adult Learners
5. Facilitating Adult Learning & Faith Formation
6. Leadership Roles & Skills for Adult Learning and Faith Formation
7. Spirituality in Adult Learning & Faith Formation
8. Designing & Implementing Adult Learning and Faith Formation

It is recommended that the courses follow the set numerical order 1 through 8. However, the following variances are allowed:

- AFL 1 is a prerequisite course and must be the first course completed.
- AFL 2 must be the second course completed.
- AFL 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 can be taken in any order after completing AFL 1 and 2.
- AFL 8 must be taken last after all other courses.

**Our Hearts Were Burning within Us* is a Pastoral Plan released in 1999 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to serve as a guideline for adult faith formation in the United States. It is presented as a three week seminar and seeks to place adult faith formation at the center of parish catechesis. As the only Church document that uses the term "adult faith formation," the plan provides not only encouragement to leaders but also practical strategies for embedding adult faith formation within the fabric of parish life.

This prerequisite course provides leaders in adult faith formation the opportunity to review selected key passages from the plan, to reflect on our Bishops' words in light of actual experience, and to share experiences of working with adults in faith formative settings.

The Certificate in AFL is now being made available to all parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is VLCFF?

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) at the University of Dayton is a growing initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere online via the Internet. The goal is to support the church's professional ministry of religious education and faith formation in cyberspace. The Archdiocese of Atlanta is a "partner" diocese in the VLCFF program which entitles students to reduced fees for the VLCFF programs and courses.

What is the Certificate in Catechesis?

The Certificate in AFL is a ministry education program for adults in all areas of adult catechetical ministry. It equips catechists and teachers with the knowledge, skills, practical tools, and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive catechetical ministry.

When all courses in this or any Certificate Program from the University of Dayton VLCFF are completed, the courses alone do not confer master catechist status. The other requirements are spelled out in "*Communicating the Catholic Message*" (CCM), the official Catechist Certification guideline for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Go to www.archatl.com under Office of Evangelization & Discipleship for detailed information about Master Catechist requirements. Questions about certification should be directed to the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship.

How does the program work?

The VLCFF program is an online program available for access 24/7, 365. The student is required to submit programmed work assignments to an online facilitator and the other members of a class (called a cohort) who respond individually and collectively by means of an online Discussion Board. Being assessable online, the students can work the program into their particular lifestyle and schedule their course work when it is most convenient, any hour of the day or night.

There are six regular 5 week cycles in the VLCFF calendar year (and one 3 week cycle that is reserved for seminars only). The Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership Program requires approximately 16 months to complete if the prerequisite course and seven core courses are taken consecutively. Each course earns 2.5 CEU credits (Continuing Education Units) or 30 CEUs total credit.

When the Certificate in AFL is finished, the student will have completed the course work requirement that could lead to master catechist status when all other requirements for master catechist status are fulfilled.

What is a "cohort"?

All VLCFF courses operate with cohorts. The term cohort means a group of students who form a class unit and stay together during the entire program. The students in each cohort would remain classmates throughout the program. There is an option to form a "closed" cohort within a parish or groups of parishes or allow VLCFF to assign a student to a cohort made up of students in other parts of the U.S. or globally.

What does the VLCFF Certificate in Catechesis Program cost?

The Archdiocese, through the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, is offering a special tuition incentive of \$25 per course, or a total of \$200 for the prerequisite course and seven core courses. The total fee of \$200 is due and payable **in advance**. The regular, published rate for any VLCFF course is \$105 for non-participating dioceses and \$50 per course for partner dioceses.

Since the Archdiocese of Atlanta is a partner diocese, each student can save half the catalog tuition in addition to the 50% tuition incentive provided by the Office of E & Discipleship as an incentive to get more catechists certified. In addition to the course fee, the student must pay a one-time, non-refundable \$20 fee for enrolling in a certificate program. Some courses require textbooks that can be purchased separately through VLCFF. The books are reasonably priced in relation to university level textbooks.

Is the program available in Spanish?

No, the entire program is not yet available in Spanish. However, it may be possible to create a Spanish-speaking cohort if there are enough interested Spanish-speaking participants. VLCFF has Spanish-literate facilitators and are working on translating the course content.

When will the program start?

The Certificate Programs offered by VLCFF are scheduled to start each January in conjunction with the start of Cycle 1 on the VLCFF class schedule. If you are interested in forming or joining a cohort, please fill in the attached application and student learning contract. Forward it to Michele McHale-Pickard, mmchale-pickard@archatl.com. If you have questions, call 404-920-7625.

What is a Student Learning Contract?

The Archdiocese of Atlanta, through the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship, provides an exceptional cost savings for each catechist in the Certificate Programs as a result of being a partner diocese and offering an additional tuition incentive, that we fund up front, we require every student to sign a learning contract to help ensure that the student is committed to participate in all courses in a certificate program and complete the program.

How do I enroll and pay the tuition?

The first step is to fill in and send the application and student learning contract to the attention of Michele McHale-Pickard at the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship. Your contact information will be forwarded to the University of Dayton and they will guide you through the registration process. Any questions about creating a student profile, registering, paying tuition or ordering any required books should be forwarded to Richard Drabik, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH 45469-7013. Phone: 937-229-3874. Email: rdrabik1@udayton.edu

Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership Application

First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parish _____

Role in Parish _____

Highest Level of Education _____

Degree/Institution _____

Primary Experience in Catechesis _____

_____ Years Experience _____

Occupation/Organization _____

Reason for Applying to the Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership Program

PRINT Contact Information:

Home Phone _____ Office Phone _____

Mobile Phone _____ Email _____

I would like to apply for the Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership. I have read and understand the commitment that will be required. I understand that I must submit an application and a signed Student Learning Contract and pay advance tuition directly to VLCFF at time of registration.

Signature _____ Date _____

Student Learning Contract—Certificate in Adult Formation Leadership

The purpose of this learning contract is to specify the roles and responsibilities of the student applicant to ensure that there are no misunderstandings about the Catechesis Program.

Student Responsibilities—the overriding responsibility is to recognize that you are responsible and accountable for all that you do or fail to do in the program. The program offers the opportunity to achieve a foundation in Catechesis that can lead to Master Catechist status if all other requirements are met.

1. You will exhibit a sincere effort and commitment to fulfill your responsibilities as a student.
2. You will start the program with the intent of completing all eight (8) courses and complete the program with your cohort.
3. You will commit to full participation in each course by doing your weekly assignments on time and in line with your Instructor's guidelines. Specifically, you will allocate a minimum of five to ten (5-10) hours each week for designated reading assignments and posting three (3) or more responses on the Online Course Discussion Board.
4. You will participate from Monday through Saturday of each week and not wait until the end of the week to initiate your reading and posting to the Discussion Board.
5. You will check your VLCFF mailbox daily for messages from the Instructor or fellow students.
6. If you experience a problem in completing your assignments, you will take the initiative to contact your Instructor ASAP to explain your situation and determine the best way to get up to date.
7. You will practice common courtesy with high standards of professionalism in all of your postings and exchanges with your Instructor, the VLCFF staff and fellow students.
8. If you fail to complete the full program of eight (8) courses, you will have the option of completing the program by enrolling individually for the remaining courses without the benefit of the tuition incentive paid by the Archdiocese. The course fee for any remaining course would revert to the member diocese rate of \$50 per course. If you drop out and fail to complete all courses, the Archdiocese will bill you for the tuition incentive or \$25 for each courses not completed. In addition, the VLCFF portion of the tuition for all non-completed courses is non-refundable. All tuition and course fees must be paid in advance unless advising VLCFF of your decision not to start a course.
9. You will be responsible for paying the student portion of the course fees (\$25 x 8 course = \$200) in advance of starting the first course. If your course fees will be reimbursed by a third party, you are responsible for paying the fees and securing your reimbursement. VLCFF will not bill third parties.
10. You will be responsible for advising the cohort coordinator of your intent to enroll in each course and purchasing any books or course materials, in advance of starting a course.
11. You will be personally responsible for resolving any issues concerning VLCFF policies or practices. OFD has no responsibility or input into the development or administration of the VLCFF programs.

12. You will be graded by your Instructor on a scale of: Good, Very Good or Distinguished for each course. You are responsible for resolving any questions or issues involving grades with your Instructor and/or VLCFF.
13. Upon the satisfactory completion of the Program, you can apply for a Certificate of Completion in Adult Formation Leadership from VLCFF University of Dayton.
14. The completion of the AFL or any other VLCFF Certificate Program does not alone qualify a student for master catechist status. (See *Communicating the Catholic Message*, for all requirements.)

Student Acknowledgement: By signing this Learning Contract, the student agrees to comply with all program requirements.

Signature_____Date_____

*Email completed application to Michele McHale-Pickard: mmchale-pickard@archatl.com
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