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## Certificate in Catechesis Program 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 Catechesis Program** that is designed for catechists, teachers and parish leaders who desire to expand their knowledge of the fundamentals of Catholic Church teaching. The program consists of two levels of study and 12 courses of study in theology, methods and formation. The two levels must be taken in order.

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| Level I Courses   |
| <b>Theology:</b>  |
| 1. Survey of Catholic Doctrine                            |
| 2. Introduction to Scripture                              |
| 3. Images of Jesus  |
| 4. Sacraments   |
| <b>Methods:</b>   |
| 1. Introduction to Catechesis                             |
| <b>Formation:</b>   |
| 1. Introduction to Prayer                                 |
| Level II Courses  |
| <b>Theology:</b>  |
| 1. Old Testament  |
| 2. New Testament  |
| 3. Ecclesiology: Beginnings of the Church                 |
| 4. Introduction to Practical Morality                     |
| <b>Methods:</b>   |
| 1. Faith and Human Development                            |
| <b>Formation:</b>   |
| 1. Vocation, Spirituality, and Discipleship of Catechists |

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 **Catechesis** Program requires approximately **two** years to complete if all **twelve** courses are taken consecutively. Each course earns 2.5 CEU credits (Continuing Education Units) or 30 CEUs total credit.

When the Certificate in Catechesis is completed, the student will have completed the course work requirement that allows them to apply for master catechist status if and when the other requirements for master catechist status are fulfilled.

The Certificate in Catechesis is now being made available to all parishes 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 Catechesis Program is a ministry education program for adults in all areas of catechetical ministry. It equips catechists and teachers with the knowledge, skills, practical tools, and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive catechetical ministry.

The Certificate in Catechesis is recognized by the Office of Evangelization & Discipleship as one of the required foundation components for awarding of Master Catechist status. The certificate alone does not confer Master Catechist status. The other requirements to achieve Master Catechist status are spelled out in "*Communicating the Catholic Message*" (CCM), the official Catechist Certification guideline for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Go to [www.archatl.com](http://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 assignment 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.

### How long does it take to get a certificate?

The course schedule is established and managed by VLCFF (Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation) at the University of Dayton with seven consecutive cycles from January through December each year. Classes are scheduled in the first six cycles with the seventh cycle reserved for seminar courses. It would be academically possible for a cohort to complete as many as six courses in a calendar year if the courses were taken consecutively. Therefore, a student or cohort could complete all 12 courses in two years.

### **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 course or program. The students in each cohort would be classmates throughout the program. There is an option to form a 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 student per course, or a total of \$300 for all 12 courses. The total fee of \$300 is due and payable in advance. The catalog rate is \$105 per course for non-participating dioceses and \$50 per course for partner dioceses. OFD is absorbing half of the tuition as an incentive to get more catechists certified in catechesis. In addition to the course fee, the student must pay a one-time, non-refundable fee of \$20 for enrolling in a certificate program. Some courses require text books that can be purchased separately through VLCFF. The books are reasonably priced in relation to university level textbooks.

### **What are the roles of VLCFF, the University of Dayton and the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship?**

The Certificate in Catechesis operates under the jurisdiction and direction of the University of Dayton. Their role is to establish requirements, guidelines, provide the content, assign qualified instructors, and administer the program. The role of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship is to serve as an intermediary in making the program available to parishes and catechists. OFD has no authority to change, establish or influence the program requirements, content or guidelines put in place by VLCFF and the University of Dayton. Once a student begins a certificate program, all communications and questions should be directed to VLCFF and not the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship.

### **Is the program available in Spanish?**

No, the entire program is not available as yet 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 Atlanta cohort of the Certificate in Catechesis program is scheduled to start in the first VLCFF course cycle in January. If you are interested in forming or joining a cohort, please fill in the attached application and forward it to Michele McHale-Pickard, [mmchale-pickard@archatl.com](mailto:mmchale-pickard@archatl.com). If you have questions, call direct to Michele McHale-Pickard at 404-920-7625.



### **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](mailto:rdrabik1@udayton.edu)

## Certificate in Catechesis 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 Catechesis Program

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Language Preference: I want to take the course in \_\_\_\_\_ English \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish

Contact Information:

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to apply for the Certificate in Catechesis Program. I have read and understand the commitment that will be required. I understand that I must submit a signed Student Learning Contract and a check for advance tuition payment or pay by credit card directly to VLCFF.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Learning Contract—Certificate in Catechesis

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 twelve (12) 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 twelve (12) 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 courses 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 all courses not completed. In addition, the VLCFF portion of the tuition for all non-completed courses is non-refundable. Course fees are expected to be paid in advance for all courses registered unless you notify VLCFF you will not be participating before the course begins.
9. 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.
10. You will be responsible for paying the student portion of the course tuition ( $\$25 \times 12 \text{ course} = \$300$ ) 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.
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 Catechesis Program, you will receive a Certificate in Catechesis from VLCFF University of Dayton.
14. You may explore the possibility of applying for Master Catechist from the Archdiocese of Atlanta when all other requirements have been fulfilled. (See *Communicating the Catholic Message* for additional 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](mailto:mmchale-pickard@archatl.com)  
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