



in cooperation with the



## Certificate in Youth Ministry Program Overview 2022

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 Youth Ministry Program** that is designed for catechists who desire to specialize in Youth Ministry.

The Certificate in Youth Ministry Program equips leaders with the knowledge, skills, practical tools, and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive ministry with youth.

The program consists of eight 5 week courses; three introductory and five core youth ministry courses.

<b>Basic Courses</b>
1. Survey of Catholic Doctrine
2. Introduction to Scripture
3. Faith and Human Development
<b>Core Courses</b>
4. A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry
5. Relational Ministry with Youth
6. Prayer and Worship with Adolescents
7. Principles for Addressing Diversity Issues in Youth Ministry
8. Planning Youth Ministry Events

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 Youth Ministry Program requires approximately one and a half years to complete if all eight courses are taken consecutively. Each course earns 2.5 CEU credits (Continuing Education Units) or 20 CEUs total credit.

When the Certificate in Youth Ministry 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 Youth Ministry Program is now 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 courses 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 that entitles students to reduced fees for the VLCFF programs and courses.

### What is the Certificate in Youth Ministry?

The Certificate in Youth Ministry Program is a ministry education program for catechists in ministry with youth in both parish and school settings.

The Certificate in Youth Ministry 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 program is online 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 incorporate the program into their particular lifestyle and schedule their course work when it is most convenient, 24/7.

### 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 student/cohort to complete as many as six courses in a calendar year if the courses were taken consecutively. A student or cohort could complete all eight courses in approximately eighteen months.

### What is a "cohort"?

All VLCFF courses operate with cohorts. The term cohort means a group of students who form a class unit and remain 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 program in Youth Ministry cost?**

The catalog tuition is \$100 per course for non-partner dioceses, or \$800 for all eight courses. Since the Archdiocese of Atlanta is a partner diocese, the fee is reduced to \$50 per course or \$400. The Archdiocese, through the Office of Evangelization and Discipleship, is offering an additional tuition incentive of \$25 per course that brings the student's share of the tuition to \$200 for all eight courses with the Archdiocese absorbing the remaining \$200. The student's share of the tuition \$200 is due and payable at the time of course registration.

OFD is offering this tuition incentive as a motivation to get more catechists certified in youth ministry. In addition to the course fee, the student must pay a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$25 to enroll in a certificate program. Some courses require textbooks that can be purchased separately through sources that VLCFF will provide. 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 & Discipleship?**

The Certificate in Youth Ministry 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 & 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 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 & 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 Spanish-speaking participants. VLCFF has Spanish speaking facilitators who are working on translating the course content.

### **When will the program start?**

The next Atlanta cohort for the Certificate in Youth Ministry is scheduled to start in the first VLCFF course cycle in January 2022. If you are interested in forming or joining a cohort, please fill in the attached application and student learning contract. Forward both forms to Michele McHale-Pickard [mmchale-pickard@archatl.com](mailto:mmchale-pickard@archatl.com). If you have questions about the program, call direct to Michele at 404-920-7625.

## Certificate in Youth Ministry 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 Youth Ministry Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

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

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

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

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

***Attach Student Learning Contract and email to Michele McHale-Pickard:***

***[mmchale-pickard@archatl.com](mailto:mmchale-pickard@archatl.com)***

## Student Learning Contract—Certificate in Youth Ministry

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 Youth Ministry 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 Youth Ministry 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 mail box 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 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 each course not completed. 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 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.
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 Youth Ministry Program, you will receive a Certificate of Completion in Youth Ministry from VLCFF University of Dayton.
14. You may explore the possibility of applying for Master Catechist Certification in Youth Ministry 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)  
Rev. Jan. 2022*