



Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

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A Process for Identifying and Forming New Parish Catechists

The process of identifying and forming new parish catechists is an ongoing challenge in most parishes. It is recommended that each parish employ a process that considers sufficient formation and discernment. The mission of the catechist is complex, and it should not be undertaken by the potential catechist without ample discernment, formation, and education. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, writes about the catechist, “Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but ‘by attraction’.”^[13]

The following is a suggested process and may be adapted for local use:

Step One IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CATECHISTS

- Celebrate Catechetical Sunday at Mass in September of each year.
- Attract by example, not by pressure.
- Personally, invite, and encourage specific (but do NOT recruit or pressure) retirees, new mothers or fathers, college students, grandparents, former teachers, etc.

Step Two GATHER POTENTIAL CATECHISTS

- Meet with prospective catechists at a lunch or dinner provided by the parish.
- Encourage potential catechists to participate in parish and diocesan events and formation opportunities.

Step Three DEVELOP A FORMATION PLAN FOR EACH POTENTIAL CATECHIST

- Provide the requirements for the *Living and Leading by Faith Catechist and Catechetical Leader Formation Process* found in the *Annual Guidebook*.
- Meet with each potential catechist individually to determine what formation is needed.
- Determine the potential candidate’s commitment to the mission of the work of catechesis early in the process and assist in their discernment.

Step Four **ASSIGN A MENTOR AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OBSERVATIONS**

- Assign a catechist mentor to each potential catechist.
- Set a schedule for the mentor and potential catechist to meet.
- Set a schedule for the potential catechist to observe religious education sessions, under the supervision of an experienced catechist (may be the mentor).
- Discuss progress with the mentor and the potential candidate individually and together.

Step Five **PROVIDE INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

- When appropriate, and after careful discernment, provide the potential catechist with an opportunity to serve an internship under the guidance of a well-formed and educated catechist (may be the mentor).
- Provide regular opportunities for assessment and evaluation.

Step Six **CONTINUE FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- By this point, the potential catechist should be enrolled in the Initial courses for the *Living and Leading by Faith Catechist and Catechetical Leader Formation Process*.

Step Seven **DISCERN PLACEMENT**

- After an interview with the potential catechist, the Pastor/Administrator and the Director of Faith Formation/Coordinator of Religious Education determine the action that needs to be taken.
- If the decision is to include the potential catechist as a regular catechist, begin plans for grade level assignment, further formation, etc.

Step Seven **ASSESSMENT AND ONGOING FORMATION**

- Provide regular assessment and ongoing formation opportunities.
- Meet regularly with all new catechists.
- Encourage participation in all parish and diocesan activities, courses, and events.
- Celebrate Catechetical Sunday on the third Sunday in September of each year.

MARY, QUEEN OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION, PRAY FOR US!