



# ST. PHILIP INSTITUTE OF CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION

## **Catechist Certification Policy**

When Christ ascended into Heaven after his Resurrection, he gave the command to his apostles: make disciples of all nations and teach them to observe what Christ commanded. Christians are entrusted with the mission to pass on the faith. In the *Constitution on Teaching* (53), Bishop Strickland wrote:

The founding of the Institute is done especially with the formation of our lay catechists in mind. This formation should be intense, but also convenient, placing as few demands as possible on the time and schedule of our volunteers. A technology-driven delivery system for teaching will aid this greatly.

In accordance with the *Constitution on Teaching*, the St. Philip Institute is called to provide excellent formation for catechists and anyone volunteering in faith formation in the Diocese of Tyler. Inspired by Bishop's vision, the St. Philip Institute launched a new training site for catechists, **Into the Chariot**. This site will host the courses developed by the St. Philip Institute. Each course will contain videos, assessments (questions or prompts), and some will also be delivered as live training sessions.

### **Previous Formation**

Recognizing that a great number of our current catechists previously received various levels of as through the Office of Faith Formation, the institute will continue to recognize those endorsements in the certification process. However, for new and ongoing catechist training the primary means of certification will be managed by the St. Philip Institute via courses that we develop or courses from either the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University or the Augustine Institute.

The St. Philip Institute will provide on-site training seminars on a rotating schedule to help meet these requirements. Online courses will also be offered for convenience. The progress of all catechists will be monitored on the new online portal for catechists. This portal is called Into the Chariot. Pastors, catechists, and others who have questions about curriculum options for faith formation should contact the Director of Faith Formation, Dr. Luke Arredondo.

## Levels of Catechist Certification

1. **Foundational Catechist Certification** is the basic training required to become a catechist in the Diocese of Tyler, or to be a teacher in any faith formation program. This is for everyone!
2. **Basic Catechist Certification** is necessary for all catechists working with students beyond the elementary age, whether in religious education, youth ministry, or Christian initiation ministries.
3. **Intermediate Catechist Certification** is required for all catechists working with high-school age students and above.
4. **Advanced Catechist Certification** is the highest level of certification and it is intended for volunteers or employees of the diocese or parishes who are the Director of Religious Education or Director of Faith Formation. Directors must work toward Advanced Certification by the year 2023 or within four years of beginning their role as a director. Advanced Certification is also necessary for any catechist in the diocese to teach courses to other catechists or to train new catechists.

**Alternative Certification Procedures** are allowed if catechists have an undergraduate or graduate degree in Catholic theology, religious studies, or a closely related field; they can apply for a catechist certification by contacting the Director of Faith Formation directly.

**Previous Endorsements are honored as well.** If you are already certified under the previous endorsement process in the Diocese of Tyler, your parish leader or pastor simply needs to notify the Director of Faith Formation via email regarding previous endorsements.

## Also Required for Catechists

### Ongoing Formation

Once catechists have achieved Intermediate Catechist Certification, they are required to continue ongoing faith formation by participating in workshops, conferences, seminars, and/or courses sponsored by the St. Philip Institute and other courses for continuing education credits. At a minimum, they should participate in the local deanery-level trainings offered throughout the year and at diocesan-wide events like the Eucharistic Congress.

## **Spiritual Formation of the Catechist**

In addition to the various levels of certification, which have their own specific requirements, all catechists in the Diocese of Tyler are expected to have a mature dedication to their own spiritual formation. Whether someone is preparing for foundational certification for the first time or is preparing for intermediate or advanced certification, all those engaged in catechetical ministry should devote themselves to following Jesus Christ by an active life of prayer, liturgical and sacramental devotion, and personal piety.

At a minimum, catechists of the Diocese of Tyler must:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
2. Have an active prayer life consisting of vocal prayer and mental prayer.
3. Regularly receive the sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist.
4. If married, be in a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church.
5. Have received all the sacraments which are appropriate for one's state in life.

Catechists should seek out a spiritual director if possible. It is also recommended that catechists take a retreat each year. As St. Pope Paul VI put it, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Therefore, while not ignoring the theological formation and pastoral training necessary to be an effective catechist, all those engaged in catechetical ministry must also make a concerted effort to cultivate a life of holiness.

## **Ethics and Integrity Training**

As with any other form of ministry in the Diocese of Tyler, catechists must be trained and comply with the requirements of our safe environment program (Virtus) including background checks. There are no exemptions to this requirement. For more information, see the Safe Environment web page on the Diocese of Tyler website.

## Requirements for Catechist Certification by Level

### Foundational Level

The **Foundational Level** of certification is the minimum level of preparation needed to serve as a catechist in a classroom for faith formation, Catholic school religion programs, and other ministries in the diocese. It is intended to prepare someone for their initial experience as a teacher of the faith by offering a systematic and broad overview of the basic principles of Catholic theology. Because it is an entry-level requirement, we will prioritize this being done via our online training site, [Into the Chariot](#).

#### Requirements

1. Complete *The Way of Christ* Program.

Complete *The Way of Christ* formation program at the Into the Chariot website, only lessons 1-26 (the “Going Deeper” section is not required).

There are three components to The Way of Christ: 1) lessons, 2) videos, 3) quizzes. This is the same formation program used for adults in the RCIA program. You can find information for ordering the books (English and Spanish), viewing the videos (only available in English), and taking the quizzes (English and Spanish) on the adult formation webpage at [Into the Chariot](#).

2. Submit pastor letter.

A catechist’s pastor must verify that they regularly attend Mass and participate in the liturgical life of their parish community. This verification may be completed by filling out an online form or mailing a letter to the Director of Faith Formation, Dr. Luke Arredono. Note: while anyone can complete The Way of Christ course, the selection of catechists for a parish is the right and duty of the pastor. Simply completing the formation element does not automatically make one a catechist. Pastors have the final authority in approving catechists to serve in their parishes. Submit form by [clicking this link](#).

## **Basic Level Through the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University**

**Basic Level** catechist certification prepares you more directly for your particular role in catechesis. This level's requirements involve 1) a deeper and more profound immersion in Catholic theology and 2) workshops related to your area of ministry. Basic Level catechist certification is necessary for everyone working with students *above the elementary level* (junior high, high school, young adult, or adult).

Note: previous endorsement at the Basic Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete the Foundational Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete a series of courses for a deeper and more profound immersion in Catholic theology:

English-speaking catechists should complete the [Foundational Catechist Certification](#) course through the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University in Steubenville online. This can be completed individually, by attending live workshop sessions in the Diocese of Tyler, or a combination of the two. All catechists who complete the online course must have their responses reviewed by a mentor approved by Dr. Luke Arredondo.

Spanish-speaking catechists may instead complete the following five workshops in the [Familia y fe hispana](#) track: 1) La evangelización y el kerigma, 2) El depósito de la fe: una introducción al Catecismo, 3) La vocación del catequista, 4) La Iglesia: dispensadora de los misterios y guardián del depósito de la fe, 5) La Madre de Dios en la devoción hispana.

Both sets of courses can be completed individually online, by attending live workshop sessions, or a combination of the two.

**THIRD:** Either complete an elective workshop through the Franciscan at Home program which is related to one's area of ministry or attend a specific training offered by the St. Philip Institute which relates to the catechist's primary area of ministry.

## **Intermediate Level Through the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University**

The **Intermediate Level** of catechist certification prepares you for interacting with adults in faith formation. This level is for those working with adults beyond the age of 18 such as in RCIA, young adult, continuing adult faith formation, and marriage ministries.

Note: previous endorsement at the Intermediate Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete Basic Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete the Advanced Catechist Certification Course, [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) through the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University. This can be completed individually online, by attending live workshop sessions, or a combination of the two. All responses must be reviewed by a mentor approved by Dr. Arredondo. (There are no Spanish courses offered at the Catechetical Institute at Franciscan University at this time.)

**THIRD:** Complete an elective workshop or program. Complete an approved elective workshop through the Franciscan at Home program which is related to one's area of ministry.

**FOURTH:** Attend a specific training offered by the St. Philip Institute which relates to the catechist's primary area of ministry. For example, a catechist whose primary focus is Christian Initiation would attend or view a training specifically concentrating on *The Way of Christ*, while a marriage formation catechist would attend a workshop on the Witness to Love, etc.

## **Advanced Level Through the Catechetical Institute at Fransican University**

**Advanced Level** certification is required for anyone who is in charge of or *leading the faith formation* program at a Parish or Mission in the Diocese of Tyler, such as a Director of Religious Education or Faith Formation Leader. If you are named as a faith formation leader and have not yet received Advanced Level certification, you must begin progress toward the Advanced Level certification and complete the process within four years.

Note: previous endorsement at the Advanced Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete the Intermediate Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete the [Parish Catechetical Leader Track](#).

**THIRD:** Complete a directed study course with Dr. Luke Arredondo.

## Basic Level Through the Augustine Institute

**Basic Level** catechist certification prepares you more directly for your particular role in catechesis. This level's requirements involve 1) a deeper and more profound immersion in Catholic theology and 2) workshops related to your area of ministry. Basic Level catechist certification is necessary for everyone working with students *above the elementary level* (junior high, high school, young adult, or adult).

Note: previous endorsement at the Basic Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete the Foundational Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete Symbolon, Part I: [Knowing the Faith](#) (English) / [Conociendo la Fe](#) (Spanish), sessions 1-5, logging in through your parish. After viewing the sessions and reading supplemental materials in FORMED, complete the assessment on the St. Philip Institute's [Into the Chariot](#) site.

You can attend the Symbolon session online or in a group at a workshop, or a combination of the two. The assessments must be completed, in either case, through the St. Philip Institute's [Into the Chariot](#).

**THIRD:** Attend a specific training offered by the St. Philip Institute which relates to your primary area of ministry.



## **Intermediate Level Through the Augustine Institute**

The **Intermediate Level** of catechist certification prepares you for interacting with adults in faith formation. This level is for those working with adults beyond the age of 18 such as in RCIA, young adult, continuing adult faith formation, and marriage ministries.

Note: previous endorsement at the Intermediate Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete Basic Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete in-depth coursework using Symbolon, Part I: [Knowing the Faith](#) / [Conociendo la fe](#), Sessions 6-10 and Part II: [Living the Faith](#) / [Viviendo la fe](#), Sessions 1-10, signing in through your parish. Alternatively, Spanish-speaking catechists can complete the course [Kerigma Cristiano](#) through FORMED or [online](#) from the Archdiocese of Monterrey.

You can attend the sessions online at FORMED or in a group at a workshop, or a combination of the two. The assessments must be completed, in either case, through the St. Philip Institute's [Center for Faith Formation](#).

**THIRD:** Complete an approved elective program from the FORMED library which is related to your area of ministry. An assessment must be completed through the St. Philip Institute's Center for Faith Formation after completing the program.

**FOURTH:** Attend a specific training offered by the St. Philip Institute which relates to the catechist's primary area of ministry. For example, a catechist whose primary focus is Christian Initiation would attend or view a training specifically concentrating on *The Way of Christ*, while a marriage formation catechist would attend a workshop on the Witness to Love, etc.

## **Advanced Level Through the Augustine Institute**

**Advanced Level** certification is required for anyone who is in charge of or *leading the faith formation* program at a Parish or Mission in the Diocese of Tyler, such as a Director of Religious Education or Faith Formation Leader. If you are named as a faith formation leader and have not yet received Advanced Level certification, you must begin progress toward the Advanced Level certification and complete the process within four years.

Note: previous endorsement at the Advanced Level through the Office of Faith Formation in the Diocese of Tyler prior to the founding of the St. Philip Institute will still be recognized. Please ask the pastor or parish leader to fill out this [Previous Endorsement Form](#).

### **Requirements**

**FIRST:** Complete the Intermediate Level catechist certification.

**SECOND:** Complete four approved short courses from the Augustine Institute. Spanish-speakers may complete all five modules of the [Curso de Evangelizacion: Abreme](#), through the FORMED platform or [directly from Evangelizacion Activa](#). The assessments must be completed, in either case, through the St. Philip Institute's [Center for Faith Formation](#).

**THIRD:** Complete a directed study course with Dr. Luke Arredondo.