



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry  
Directory for Catechesis

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## ADULT FAITH FORMATION IN THE PARISH

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

“Catechesis with adults...has the task of accompanying them and forming the traits typical of the Christian growth to adulthood in the faith, a disciple of the Lord Jesus, within social and cultural realities for the sake of bearing witness to the faith and bring about the Kingdom of God” (Directory for Catechesis, #261).

“Adult faith formation, by which people consciously grow in the life of Christ through experience, reflection, prayer, and study, must be ‘the central task in [this] catechetical enterprise’ ” (Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, p. 2).

“Three goals to guide and direct efforts in adult faith formation [are] 1) invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in holiness of life, 2) promote and support active membership in the Christian community, [and] 3) call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world” (Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, pp. 22-24).

“The parish provides the place, persons, and means to summon and sustain adults in lifelong conversion of heart, mind, and life. It is ‘without a doubt, the most important locus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed’ ” (Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, p. 40).

### THE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY RECOMMENDS:

1. The pastor and other pastoral staff demonstrate a clear commitment to the vision and practice of lifelong growth in Catholic faith.
2. Each parish designate an adult faith formation contact who is authorized by the pastor and personally involved in ongoing formation to assume primary responsibility for implementing the ministry of adult faith formation.
3. The parish have a core team of parishioners committed to and responsible for implementing the parish vision and plan for adult faith formation.
4. Qualified catechists serve the parish’s diverse adult faith formation efforts.

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION IN THE PARISH

### GUIDELINES

1. The pastor and all pastoral staff members promote adult faith formation by
  - Designating a staff person or qualified lay parishioner as the adult faith formation contact who is certified according to the level of responsibility and/or has completed the core course, Ready Your Hearts: An Introduction to Adult Faith Formation.
  - Establishing parish policies and procedures that give priority to the vision and practice of adult faith formation.
  - Encouraging parish adults to participate in basic and continuous education in the parish.
  - Placing adult catechesis at the center of the parish mission and goals.
  - Giving adult faith formation a priority in the allocation of financial resources, in providing learning space, and in parish scheduling.
  - Providing access to various available learning resources and opportunities for adults such as print, audio, video, and online catechetical resources in a parish library.
  
2. The parish adult faith formation contact will
  - Assess the needs of the adult parish community regularly and provide suitable opportunities based on those needs.
  - Complete annual report forms as requested by the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of all the parish opportunities to reach adult parishioners.
  - Maintain contact with diocesan personnel and services especially regarding models of implementing adult faith formation in parishes of various sizes and resources.
  - Participate in the annual planning of the adult faith formation budget and specifically oversee the use of funds.
  - Practice the basic principles of adult faith formation in all facets of parish ministry.
  - Publicize local, diocesan, and community opportunities for adult enrichment through the parish bulletin or other communication tools.
  - Pursue the necessary formation, training, and diocesan certification.
  - Recruit and train adult parishioners to assist in the ministry of adult faith formation.
  - Serve as a liaison to the parish pastoral council or its faith formation committee, or serve as a member of that committee.
  - Serve as a resource person for adult faith formation.
  - Work with other parish ministers to promote cohesive, effective adult faith formation.
  
3. The parish has a functioning adult faith formation team which
  - Identifies and assesses elements of parish life that foster adult growth in faith, and, if necessary, offers recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of these elements.

- Operates within the existing parish leadership structure.
- Provides a diverse range of quality programming for parish adult faith formation.
- Receives both initial and ongoing formation to enable it to accomplish its mission effectively.
- Typically consists of three to ten members who meet on a regular basis and represent all segments of parish membership.
- Works with the pastor and parish staff to formulate a vision of adult faith formation for the parish.

4. The parish has access to a variety of catechists of adults who

- Are certified for the level of their responsibility.
- Are supported in their formation and ministry with appropriate recognition and financial assistance.
- Communicate effectively with adults.
- Have a sound grasp of Catholic doctrine and theology.
- Have acquired a familiarity with Sacred Scripture by completing at least the basic course, Introduction to Scripture.
- Possess an evangelizing spirit, a zeal for God's kingdom, and a commitment to lifelong formation.
- Witness in their own lives the truth of the faith they are communicating.

5. Lifelong Catechesis

It is recommended that parishes:

- Use various forms of continuing catechesis. Some of these may be but are not limited to:
  - The study and exploration of Sacred Scripture.
  - The study of the Church's social justice teachings.
  - Liturgical catechesis.
  - Moral decision-making.
  - The development of spirituality and prayer.
- Respect the various ways in which people learn. Some of these may be, but are not limited to:
  - The content method.
  - Inductive and deductive method.
  - Human experience.
  - Memorization.
  - Personal example of catechist and broader community.
  - Group interaction.
  - Online (see Select Websites in the Directory for Catechesis, F-4)
- Use varied formats. Some of these may be, but are not limited to:
  - Retreats.
  - Discussion Groups.
  - Mentoring groups.
  - Small faith communities.

- Include the study of timely and pressing themes in light of the Church's teachings. Among these may be, but are not limited to:
    - Our Catholic identity.
    - The increasing role of laity.
    - The role of women in the church.
    - The importance and need for religious vocations.
    - The value of life.
    - Human Sexuality.
    - Aging.
    - Terminal illness.
    - Sharing one's time and talent with others.
    - Financial support of the Church.
    - Dealing with life's hardships.
    - Economic issues.
6. Parish adult faith formation leaders promote and publicize other already existing adult faith formation opportunities such as
- Courses offered by local colleges and universities.
  - Diocesan formation sessions for parish ministers.
  - Ecumenical dialogues and inter-faith events.
  - Other spiritual enrichment opportunities sponsored by the parish, diocese, or the community.
  - The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.
  - Workshops and in-services offered by hospitals, health care facilities, and other relevant organizations.
7. The Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry will
- Allocate adequate personnel and resources for carrying out the mission of adult faith formation in the diocese.
  - Consult with the Diocesan Council for Catechesis, which supports and assists the diocesan staff with adult faith formation ministry.
  - Establish a pastoral plan for adult faith formation after consultation with other diocesan and parish leaders.
  - Give clear priority to the formation of mature disciples of Jesus.
  - Maintain current faith formation resources in the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry Library and make them available for parish review and use.
  - Provide ongoing formation, support, and resources for parish leaders, teams, and catechists in the ministry of adult faith formation.
  - Work cooperatively at the diocesan, parish, and inter-parish level to advocate for the centrality of adult faith formation and for a comprehensive, integrated ministry of adult faith formation.