

Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry

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The Gospel Embraced, Proclaimed, and Witnessed.

The Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry (OFCYM) is the representative body through which the Archbishop directs the catechetical and youth ministry activities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. As part of the evangelizing mission of the Church the OFCYM promotes lifelong catechesis through:

- Direction of the formation, certification and renewal of certification processes for parish and Catholic school catechists and catechetical leaders.
- Analysis of the state of catechesis and youth ministry in the Archdiocese leading to the design and/or implementation of appropriate responses
- Development of programs for ongoing formation of catechists, youth ministers and catechetical leaders
- Facilitation of widespread use of all media resources
- Collaboration and networking with Archdiocesan departments and agencies and other related local and national organizations.

The OFCYM mission serves catechetical leaders, youth ministers, and catechists in vicariates, deaneries, clusters and parishes of the Archdiocese.

Responding to the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church, the staff of the Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry accepts the challenge to coordinate and develop the catechetical ministries of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Our vision of catechesis is rooted in the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church and the teaching authority of the Archbishop of Chicago. Sensitive to the spiritualities and cultural values of the people, we try to match authentic teaching to the formation of those our ministries serve.

We are a staff of catechetical professionals. The art of our profession applies the very best of catechetical theory to the many practical ways catechesis can touch the lives of all involved in the many kinds of catechetical programming.

We prepare our leaders to have a collaborative role - with us, with each other, and in their parishes - as we strive to make the good better, and the better even more so.

We work to enrich the faith of the people who comprise the Catholic Church of Chicago.

SERVICES

Vicariate Catechetical Coordination

The Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry serves each of the six vicariates of the Archdiocese of Chicago and their parishes through a Vicariate Catechetical Ministry Coordinator (VCMC).

The VCMC helps parishes plan and implement catechesis for children, youth, adolescents, adults and families, considering the varied parish styles and makeup and sensitive to cultural needs. Services include leadership recruitment and training, catechist formation, material selection, conflict resolution, planning and evaluation, clarification of Archdiocesan policies and procedures, exposure to alternative models of catechesis, and general consultation.

At the same time, the VCMC helps catechetical leaders and pastoral staffs develop a broader vision of catechesis directed to adults, adolescents and children.

Vicariate Youth Ministry Coordination

The parishes of the vicariates of the Archdiocese are also served by Vicariate Youth Ministry Coordinators (VYMC).

The VYMC helps parishes to establish and improve parish youth ministry. Our vision of youth ministry is based on the USCCB document “Renewing the Vision: a Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry” the *National Directory for Catechesis*, and the best practices of youth ministry programs nationally and in the Archdiocese.

The Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry offers Archdiocesan programming as well as national and worldwide leader training and youth experiences.

The VCMC can help parishes identify and recruit youth ministry leaders and provide training for the youth minister and parish youth ministry volunteers.

Currently, youth ministers are working with us to develop a curriculum for adolescent catechesis that will help parishes and high schools improve their high school-age catechetical programming.

Catechetical Leader Formation and Certification

The Archdiocese of Chicago expects all of its catechetical leaders to be approved and certified. The Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry is proud to say that its certification process has been accredited by the USCCB/CCA.

The formation and certification process has two tracks. One is for those who have a masters degree in religious education or a related field who have the title Director of Religious Education (DRE). The other is an alternative plan of study for those who do not have a masters. They have the title Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE).

Our Coordinator of Leadership Formation and our Coordinator of Certification and Ministerial Development work with parish catechetical leaders to develop a plan toward certification.

Catechist Formation and Certification

Catechists are formed through a process of study called Fostering Faith. This process consists of five ten-hour courses. The first four are content courses based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The fifth is a methodology course that is structured according to the different areas of catechetical ministry.

Fostering Faith exists in all of the vicariates in parishes offering to be hosts. The courses are currently taught in English, Spanish and Polish. The adaptation to African American culture is called "Catching the Spirit."

Our Coordinator of Catechist Formation and the Vicariate Coordinators can answer questions about catechist formation and certification.

Adult Faith Formation

The Catholic Church challenges parishes to make adult catechesis the centerpiece of their catechetical efforts. The Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry can assist parishes in stressing the centrality of adult faith formation through consultation, workshops, and gatherings of adult faith formation leaders for sharing and planning.

Catechetical Coordinators of adult faith formation are available to help parishes assess their needs and evaluate existing programs. Services are available in English, Spanish and Polish.

Adult Confirmation Preparation

In cooperation with the Vicars of the Archdiocese and the Office for Divine Worship, the Office for

Catechesis and Youth Ministry established a catechetical program for preparing adults for Confirmation. This program targets those who need Confirmation, having been baptized, received First Communion, and are catechized. This preparation is offered in each vicariate in the needed languages.

You can contact any of the Adult Faith Formation Coordinators for information about this offering.

Chicago Catholic Scripture School

The Chicago Catholic Scripture School offers quality formation in Scripture to the adults of parishes in the Archdiocese.

The first two years of the CCSS focus praying with the Bible and a comprehensive study of some major books of the Old and New Testaments. Students who fulfill the requirements of the first two years receive a Certificate of Basic Biblical Studies from the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The remaining two years cover every other book of the Bible. Students who complete this phase receive a Four-Year Certificate of Biblical Studies from the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Sites are set up throughout the Archdiocese as needed. Sites are set up in English, Spanish and Polish under the name Chicago Catholic Scripture School.

For information about the CCSS, you can contact the coordinators of the program.

Jegen Center for Catechetical Media and Research

The Jegen Center for Catechetical Media and Research is a Catholic multi-media resource and research center with a wide array of quality materials, training, seminars and speakers. The Jegen Center offers the parishes, schools and institutions of the Archdiocese of Chicago and beyond access and guidance for marrying catechesis and technology.

The Jegen Center is many things: a library, a lecture hall, a network of catechists, and a communication center. You can screen products, conduct research, borrow materials, attend seminars, explore resources, discuss religious education with catechists across the world on the Internet and receive updates and recommendations on resources and methodologies.

The Jegen Center is located on the second floor of the Cardinal Meyer Center. The library is staffed during working hours to serve the needs of Archdiocesan parishes.