



Catechetical Certification Update:

I'm sorry that I was unable to join the CLADD sessions for April due to my surgical recovery. I am very excited to share our new catechetical certification process with each of you and wish I could have done it in a way to answer your questions. Attached to this e-newsletter is a proposed brochure which I am hopeful will be approved by the Diocesan Presbyteral Council this month. Below are details about the process and the modules that I hope will answer a majority of your questions. However, if you have additional questions or are desiring registration information, please contact me at any time. Much of this work was crafted by Dr. Cheryl Fournier and what I have done is structure it in a way that benefits the busy schedules of your catechists and allows for the most efficient use of the diocesan staff's time.

The features of our diocesan certification process are:

- Designed specifically for the active parent who makes up a large majority of our catechists, sacramental prep teams and youth ministry volunteers. This is a hybrid model that includes both face-to-face sessions and dynamic digital sessions. All modules are designed for two hours of instruction time, whether digital or face-to-face.
- The process uses the framework required by the USCCB for catechetical certification. When we surveyed dioceses in Region IX, those with the most catechist participation in certification were with programs developed by the local diocese. Although there are incredible national programs through RCI Benziger, Our Catholic Faith Delivered and others, we felt for the time dedicated by catechists, having someone local who understands SW Iowa is a benefit. The only change that I made to the process is to move the retreat and methodology to the beginning of the process rather than starting with content. My hope is that catechists, youth ministry volunteers and sacramental prep team members will find success early on with the children and teens, which will then help them with context towards the content areas.
- Participants will be paired together as a team throughout the entire process. The participants will receive reflection questions a few weeks before each session that they can discuss prior to the class. This is designed for two reasons: to verbalize to a classmate what is percolating in their minds and to add a human element to the sessions whether theology or methodology.
- There is no fee to the participants or to the parish communities. The cost of the certification process is covered through generous donations from the Annual Diocesan Appeal. The department budget is not increased because of this initiative. We have allocated funding for this process with the budget that has already been set.
- Sessions are facilitated primarily by me. However, other diocesan directors and staff who have formal training in certain content areas will be adjunct facilitators. Some

modules, especially *Fostering Faith Growth in Catechetical Formation*, will also include experienced catechetical leaders throughout the diocese who will share their experience with the participants.

- Regions can combine to have the digital sessions taught face-to-face as well if we have a significant number of people attending. I will work closely with the catechetical leaders in those regions for planning and logistics.
- There will be a special awards ceremony planned annually for the west and east where Bishop Pates will award different levels of certification to participants with family and pastoral leadership present.
- We will begin this fall with Year 1 Formation. The modules in years 2 and 3 will begin fall 2017. Dates for the formation as well as locations will be planned shortly along with a registration process.

Thank you and your catechists/youth ministry volunteers for another great catechetical season:

I'm not sure if it is my age, but each year the end of our catechetical year seems to come sooner and sooner. For Tessa, Sheri and I, please know that it is the opportunities to be with you and share your joys and challenges that keep us inspired every day. I am absolutely amazed at the Jubilee stories, the opportunities you and your communities have created to encounter mercy, and the ways in which our children and teens reflect God back to us. Please know the difference you make in each person you minister to and with.

Next week we celebrate four special people who have dedicated their lives in formational ministry: Sue Peterson (St. Boniface), Barb Mease (St. Pius X), Deacon Bill Richer (St. Francis) and Cindee Hays (St. Mary.) Their sacrifice of love to their catechists, youth ministry volunteers, children, teens and parents throughout the generations is a testimony of joy for me, and perhaps all of you. As they begin a new phase in their lives, I hope they know that we who continue as catechetical leaders in the Diocese of Des Moines stand upon their shoulders.

Growing Disciples E-Newsletter for the summer:

This is our last weekly e-newsletter for this catechetical year. As we have done in the past, we will post an e-newsletter once a month in June and July to keep you updated. Our next weekly e-newsletter will begin once again on Wednesday, April 3, 2016. Have a great end of your year and a wonderful summer.