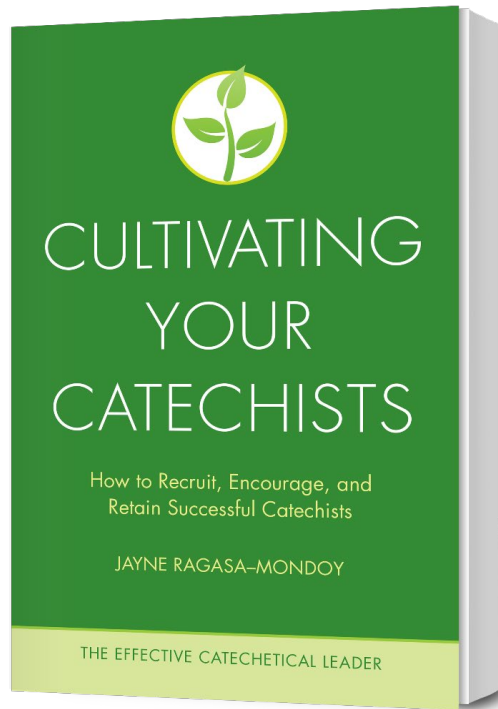


Cultivating Your Catechists



How to Recruit, Encourage and Retain Successful Catechists

By Jayne Ragasa-Mondoy



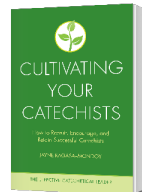
Agenda

1. More than Volunteerism
2. The Right Stuff: A Catechist's Role Description
3. Positive/Negative Approaches to Recruitment
4. Strategies for Recruitment
5. Care and Feeding: Ongoing Formation
6. Supervision, Evaluation & Record Keeping
7. Retaining Catechists
8. Building a Catechetical Community

More than Volunteerism

The Vocation of the Catechist

- **To serve as a catechist is to hear and respond to the Good Shepherd in a unique way by formally transmitting the faith to others.**
- **One of the greatest responsibilities of a PCL is to accompany the catechist on this journey.**



The Right Stuff

A Catechist's Role Description

Called to “*aim high*”
and to offer nothing
less than the highest
quality and a desire
to excel.



The Right Stuff

A Catechist's Role Description

Qualities of a Catechist

- A **desire** to grow in and share faith
- An **awareness** of God's grace/desire to respond to grace
- A **commitment** to Church's liturgical/sacramental and moral teachings
- A **strength** of character (patience, responsibility, confidence, creativity)
- A **generosity** of spirit, respect for diversity, habit of hospitality

Knowledge and Skills of a Catechist

- **Understanding** of Catholic Teaching and Tradition
- **Honest** and **Caring**
- **Effective** Teaching Skills



Small Group Discussion

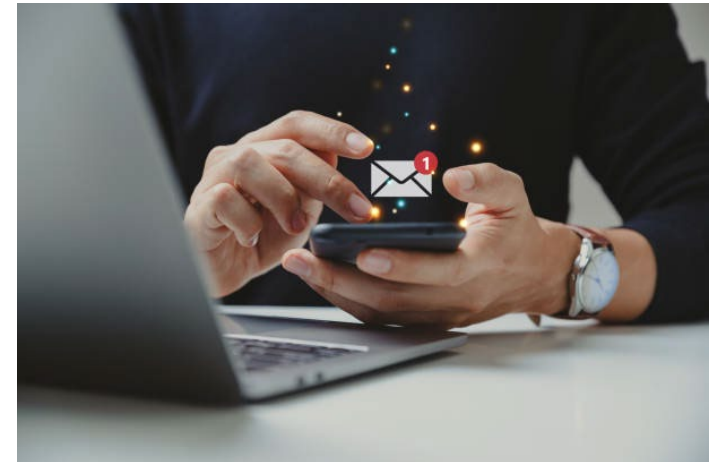
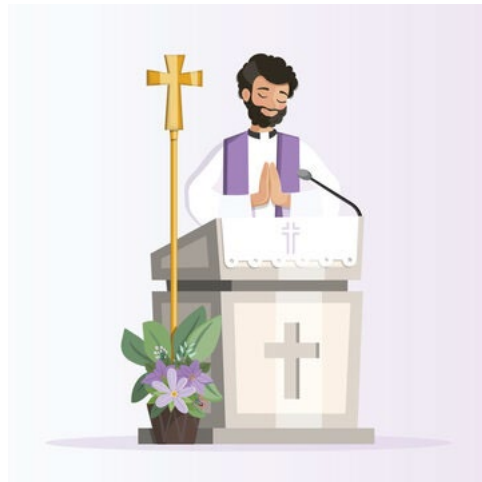


As you begin to identify prospects for the role of catechist, think of the most effective teachers you have had. Identify several qualities or skills they possessed that you would like to see in the people you call forth to serve as catechists.



Negative Approaches to Catechist Recruitment

“We are in *dire need* of catechists. We keep *losing* good catechists every year. Without catechists, we may have to *cancel* our religious education program!”



Negative Approaches to Catechist Recruitment

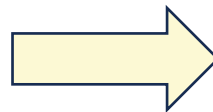
Don't sound desperate



Don't use the word



Don't just fill a seat



Positive Approaches to Catechist Recruitment

It's a Calling

Use the term **calling** instead of **recruiting**

We call people to live out a vocation

Serving as a catechist is more than just volunteering, performing a function or filling a seat



Positive Approaches to Catechist Recruitment



Pass On the Good News!

What good news? – The Good News of Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith! This fall, over 800 children and young people, preschool through grade 12, will sign up to learn more about Jesus and the Catholic faith. You can help them learn and grow in faith by becoming a catechist for Faith Formation. With classes offered Sunday mornings and evenings and Wednesday afternoons and evenings you are almost sure to find a time that fits your schedule. As you nurture the faith of our young, you will learn and grow as well! As one long-time catechist put it, “I learn so much from the children!” We provide you with training, materials, and support. Classes begin September 21. If interested or for more information, contact ...

Positive Approaches to Catechist Recruitment

Jesus did not put up posters or distribute literature inviting people to follow him; he used the personal approach.

Joe Paprocki (www.catechistjourney.loyolapress.com)



Strategies for Recruitment

A call to mission and witness



Be Centered in Christ



Include an assurance of accompaniment and skill development



Be an experience of evangelization that touches heart



Be personal and joyful



Stand at the crossroads of faith and life, sanctifying the human experience

Strategies for Recruitment

Getting people to say YES

Think Stewardship

- Raise awareness of the gifts the ministry brings to the parish
- Share stories of children and families growing in faith
- Ask catechists to share their faith stories

Create Roles and Responsibilities

- Position description
- Catechist handbook

Build a Team

- PCL cannot do it all
- Build a team of inviters who understand the program and are enthusiastic
- Joint task is to become fishers of men and women

Identify potential pools of candidates

- Identify some target audiences or pools of potential candidates whom you can **invite** to serve as catechists (*most effective way to recruit is personal invitation*)

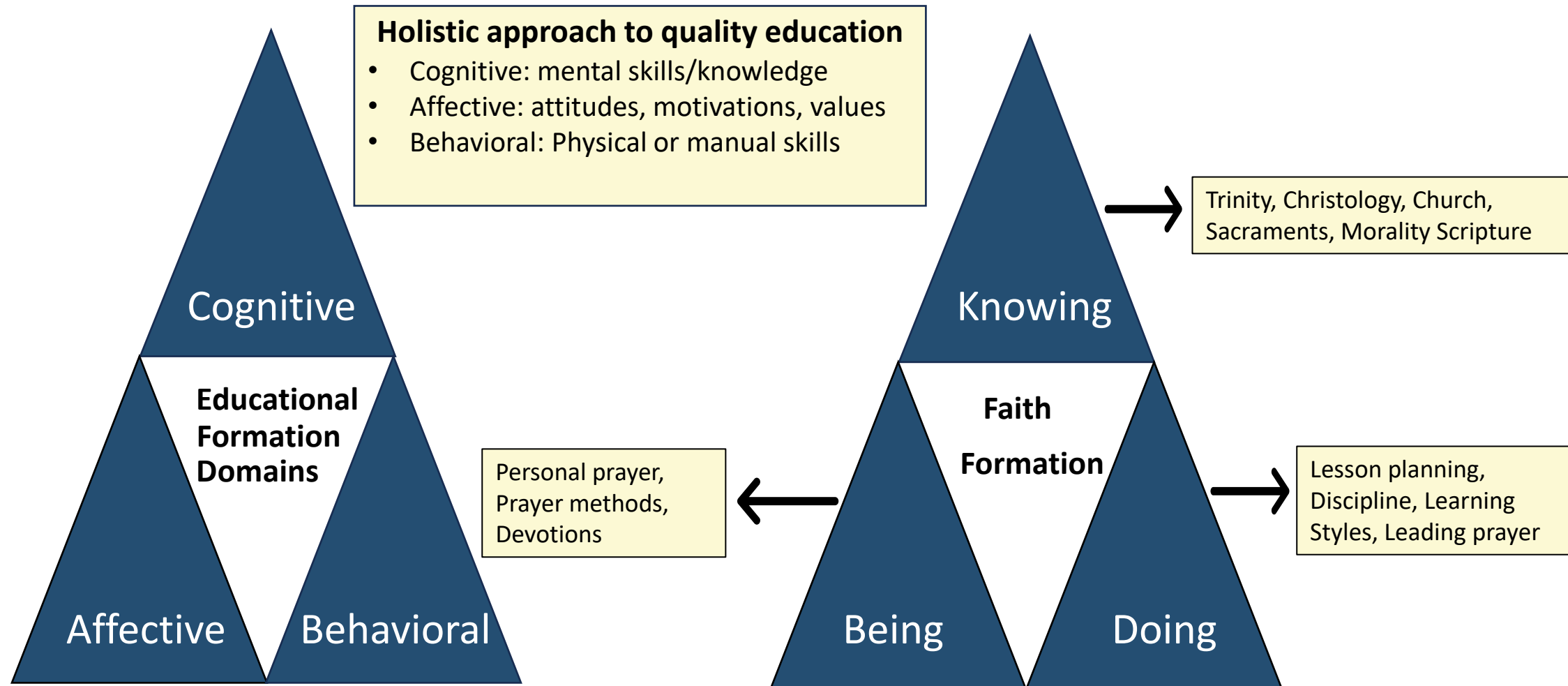
Strategies for Recruitment

Getting people to say YES

Identify Potential Pools of Candidates

- Parents of children enrolled in faith formation program
- Catechist aides
- Retired parishioners
- RCIA neophytes
- Parishioners actively engaged in adult faith formation
- Members of parish pastoral council
- Professional teachers
- Former catechists
- Referrals from pastoral staff
- Recommendations from current catechists

Care and Feeding: Ongoing Formation of Catechists



Small Group Discussion



Being, Knowing, Doing

Where is your greatest strength: being, knowing, or doing?
Which of these dimensions do you emphasize most with
your catechists?

Care and Feeding: Ongoing Formation of Catechists

- Books
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Conferences
- CDs
- DVDs
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- Online
- Courses for Credit



The Art of Catechesis



Methodology component for the Certificate in Catechesis

The Art of Catechesis will provide you with the basic understanding of the role of the catechist, the sources and methods used in catechesis, and the tools and skills that can help you effectively engage your learners. After completing this course, you will be able to prepare for your sessions more effectively, with the confidence to lead, guide, teach and inspire.

The Art of Catechesis (in-person at parishes throughout the Diocese as well as virtually)

Taught in 1, 2, and 3-day formats

Live instruction by trained instructors

Small and Large group discussions

Franciscan at Home

Forming those who form others



Partnership between the Diocese of Trenton & the Catechetical Institute
Franciscan University's "Franciscan at Home"

Set up your **FREE** account at
dioceseoftrenton.org/the-catechetical-institute-franciscan-university
Catholic School Religion Teachers (Certificate in Catechesis)



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Forming Faithful Catholic Leaders



*Partnership between the Diocese of Trenton & Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life
STEP Theology Online*

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dioceseoftrenton.org/ndstep

Course: Foundations of Catholic Belief

7-week online course



Care and Feeding: Ongoing Formation of Catechists

2024 Catechist Formation Day

The Power of Witness

*We all have a faith story; discover yours
and how to share it with others.*

with Julianne Stanz

Storyteller, Author, Encourager

Director of Outreach for Evangelization and
Discipleship at Loyola Press
Consultant to USCCB Committee on
Catechesis & Evangelization



Catechists,
Join us for a virtual



CATechist CHAT



Small Group Discussion

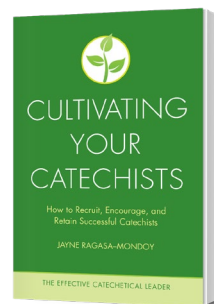


Basic and Ongoing Catechist Formation

How do you currently encourage your catechists to participate in catechist formation? Have you been successful? What can you do differently?

Supervision and Evaluation & Record Keeping

The purpose of *supervision* is not to *micromanage* but to listen to, communicate with, and *motivate* catechists toward *success*.



Supervision, Evaluation & Record Keeping

Individual Catechist Files

- Personal information
- Academic credentials
- Catechist certification record
- Evaluations
- A roster of all catechists, their class assignments, and contact information



Retaining Catechists:

The Four Principles of Retention

Support

- Match people to their abilities, not your needs
- Provide a mentor
- Know the needs of your catechists
- Be available during classes

Affirmation

- Acknowledge
- Show gratitude
- Build community

Collaborate

- Collaborate with other PCLs
- Form catechists teams to plan lessons
- Introduce catechist and Catholic school teacher

Give Public Recognition

- Celebrate Catechetical Sunday
- Highlight your catechists and programs on social media, bulletins, Diocese



Building a Catechetical Community

Seven Characteristics of a Nurturing Catechetical Community

- **Mission**
- **Joy**
- **Parameters**
- **Empowerment**
- **Recognition**
- **Engagement**
- **Stewardship**



Small Group Discussion



Seven Characteristics of a Nurturing Catechetical Community

Reflect upon the seven characteristics of a nurturing community. In what ways do you live out these characteristics of a nurturing community?