

*Catechumenate Resource Center*  
*Committee for Baptismal Ministry Development*  
*Diocese of Oregon Commission on Ministry*

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# INTRODUCTION

This Resource Center has been put together in 2009 by the Committee for Baptismal Ministry Development of the Diocese of Oregon Commission on Ministry in the interest of encouraging lay ministry and building up the Body of Christ throughout the Diocese of Oregon.

The purposes of this Catechumenate Resource Center include:

- Supporting and encouraging programs of Christian spiritual formation and discipleship throughout the diocese.
- Provision of information regarding existing catechumenate programs within the Diocese of Oregon and for comparing them regarding differences in format, content, duration, leadership, relationship to liturgical observance, etc.
- Enabling networking among existing catechumenate programs for the use of coordinators of these programs and persons who seek assistance in possibly setting up some sort of catechumenate program or workshop within their parish or within their region.
- Connecting with persons who are knowledgeable and experienced in setting up and running a successful catechumenate program within the Diocese of Oregon.

# DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Catechumen:** A person undergoing Christian formation (faith formation and discipling; preparation, training, and instruction) leading to Baptism; one who is being taught the basic principles of Christianity, more a matter of learning and acquiring a practice than intellectual content, an apprenticeship in the life of Christian faith. Secondary definition: One who is being instructed in a subject at an elementary level. In the early Church, the name was applied to one who had not yet been initiated into the sacred mysteries, but was undergoing a course of preparation for that purpose.
- **Catechumenate:** A program of Christian formation (preparation, training, and instruction) leading to Baptism, initiation into the sacred mysteries, into the practice of being a Christian; the process in which a catechumen is involved. Secondary meaning: the state or condition of being a catechumen.
- **Catechesis:** The content involved in preparation, training, and/or instruction leading to Baptism. Originally it referred to oral instruction given to catechumens.
- **Catechism:** The body of basic principles or beliefs involved in Christian faith which would normally be taught to, and acquired by, a catechumen in a catechumenate program. Secondarily, a book or manual giving a summary of the basic principles of Christianity in question-and-answer form (as found in the back of *The Book of Common Prayer*). (In current practice most catechumenate programs emphasize more Christian life practice and spiritual formation than intellectual content or rote answers to basic questions.)
- **Catechize:** To prepare, train, and instruct a person for Baptism
- **Catechetical:** Of or pertaining to a program of Christian formation leading to Baptism
- **Catechist:** A person who serves to prepare, train, and/or instruct other persons within a program of Christian formation leading to Baptism; typically a person who has been duly authorized to serve in this capacity.
- **Formation (= Spiritual Formation):** The act or process of forming something or of taking form – in this case, the forming or shaping of a person’s spirit, which may be entirely idiosyncratic but Christian formation is in accordance with a tradition of spiritual practice (a tradition of which there is not just one but many tributaries), made up of mentors, exemplars of a spiritual practice or practices, spiritual directors, and a body of spiritual literature.
- **Spiritual Director:** A person well grounded in a specific tradition of spiritual formation who serves as a spiritual friend or mentor for others who seek spiritual formation within that tradition, experienced based wisdom, and/or assistance in discerning among alternative choices, especially consequential life choices.
- **Disciple:** One who follows, embraces, and assists in spreading the teachings of another. In the Christian tradition, this would be a person who has undertaken a commitment to be a follower of Jesus Christ, especially of his practical teaching, the actions and practices he admonished his followers to do.
- **Calling:** The inward motivating source or summons of Christian discipleship, as in “Jesus calls me to follow him” and my following him, my discipleship, is my response to that calling. What tasks, even what path of life, I undertake in response

can, secondarily, be spoken of as “my calling,” what I understand I am given to do by God in Jesus, my service, my ministry.

- **Discernment:** The act or process of clarifying and identifying the task, the course of action, the life direction, the ministry to which I am called.
- **Ministry:** The act of serving; ministrations; the profession, duties, and services of a minister, one who ministers. In the Christian spiritual tradition, ministry refers primarily to the tasks or works to which one is called as a disciple of Jesus. These may be general tasks, such as the responsibilities one agrees to and assumes in Baptism, or very specific ones involving service to certain persons or groups of persons, in particular situations, and for given times.
  - **Baptismal Ministry** refers to the root sense of ministry to which a person is called in their covenant relationship to God in Christ sacramentally acknowledged in Baptism – whatever might specifically involved. It also refers to the general vows (according to the Baptismal liturgy found in *The Book of Common Prayer*) agreed to and assumed by all Baptised Christians (namely, to continue in the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers; to resist evil and, if we fall, to repent and return; to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ; to seek and serve Christ in all persons; to love our neighbors as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace; and to respect the dignity of all persons).
  - **Missional Ministry** refers to ministry involving service beyond the local congregation and the institutional structures of the Church.
  - **Congregational Ministry** refers to ministry involving service within or to the local congregation and the institutional structures of the Church.
  - **Ordained Ministry** refers to ministry of a missional or congregational sort that has been set aside and authorized sacramentally as deacons, priests, and bishops, especially to administer the sacramental mysteries of Christ.
- **Covenant (Baptismal Covenant):** The special relationship of mutual commitment established between God and a person who has received a calling in Jesus Christ and who responds accordingly with a life of service/ministry. The Baptismal Covenant is sacramentally acknowledged and established in Baptism.

# EXPLANATION OF THE CHART

## Basic Description of the Chart

*The main component of the Catechumenate Resource Center is a chart on which existing catechumenate programs in churches within the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon are described side by side under the same headings to make possible easy comparison.*

## Different Models or Types of Catechumenate Program

*We have identified 4 parameters along which each program can be placed, sorting out a range of different models or types of catechumenate program:*

*(a) Theological Content—minimum to maximum.;*

*By “theological content” we mean content that is a product of learned academic study, including doctrine, history, denominational distinction, formal Bible study, etc. A program of minimum theological content would emphasize spiritual formation over intellectual content, practice over theory, and vice versa.*

*(b) Lay Leadership and Lay Mentoring—minimum to maximum.*

*By “lay leadership” we mean a program that is lay person led (or primarily so) rather than by clergy. By “lay mentoring” we mean that the primary mentoring or apprenticeship process is for lay persons rather than clergy to serve as mentors.*

*(c) Communal and Relationship Formation—minimum to maximum.*

*By “communal and relationship formation” we mean that the formation process is primarily meant to be an experience of learning Christian practice in and through personal relationships in Christian community, rather than by oneself or at most one-on-one with a clergyperson.*

*(d) Liturgical Expression—minimum to maximum.*

*By “liturgical expression” we mean the formal enactment of rituals or portions of rituals within the local parish community which acknowledges what is going on with the catechumens as they progress through the catechumenate program to Baptism and Confirmation and/or the Renewal of Baptismal Vows. Greater or lesser use may be made of the rites found in the Book of Occasional Services.*

## Why include Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church of Seattle?

*For comparison, we have provided an example of a successful and proven program in the Seattle area that has specially impressed members of COM-B and is of a type that minimizes theological content, maximizes lay leadership and mentoring, maximizes communal and relationship formation, and maximizes liturgical expression.*

# THE CATECHIST AS A LICENSED MINISTRY

*In 2008, the Commission on Ministry published a revised edition of the Licensed Ministries Manual <[www.diocese-oregon.org/](http://www.diocese-oregon.org/)>. Among the canonically recognized licensed ministries is the ministry of Catechist. What is outlined in the Manual of the responsibilities and background for licensed catechists is meant as a resource for catechumenate programs and catechists within the Diocese. Not all persons currently serving as catechist under the direction and authority of their priest are licensed. The Manual is available to assist local parishes situate their understanding and practice with that of the broader Church.*

# LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

- *The NAAC (North American Association for the Catechumenate) has many resources available on its website at <[www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org)>. They also organize an annual get together with a plenary speaker and many workshops.*
- *The Roman Catholic RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) has been an inspiration for many catechumenate programs and activities in recent years. See their website at The North American Forum on the Catechumenate <[www.naforum.org/new\\_site/](http://www.naforum.org/new_site/)> for many resources.*
- *The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) has long been involved with the NAAC and with Episcopal liturgical and catechumenate endeavors. See their website at <[www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith.aspx](http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith.aspx)> for many resources.*
- *The United Methodist Church has also many good resources on discipleship and spiritual formation. See their Academy for Spiritual Formation website at <<http://www.upperroom.org/academy/>>.*

# USES OF THE CHART

## 1. Networking to Strengthen and Improve Existing Programs

*The chart can assist leaders of existing catechumenate programs compare features of their program in relation to others in the Diocese and possibly learn how to strengthen their program. As well it provides a means for networking among fellow catechists to compare notes, to learn from each other's experiences, and solve practical problems.*

## 2. Resourcing to Establish a New Program

*Contact information is provided for each of the existing programs. This may be used by parish leaders who may wish to establish a new catechumenate program along the lines of an existing program as described in the chart that they would like to emulate. These persons may be directly contacted or the Committee on Baptismal Ministry Development may be contacted at <com-b@diocese-oregon.org>.*

## 3. Assistance in Providing Christian/Spiritual Formation in Challenging Situations

*Each parish situation is different, and some may be unable, despite their desire, to develop a catechumenate program on their own. It may be that catechumenate outreach persons, or a team of such persons, can come up with possibilities that cannot easily be imagined within the local situation or provide for spiritual formation via external workshops or some similar means. We recommend that you first contact the Committee for Baptismal Ministry Development via email at <com-b@diocese-oregon.org>. You are welcome, nevertheless to contact directly the outreach persons identified on the chart.*

# St Gabriel, Portland

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Portland
<b>Contact Person</b>	The Rev. LouAnn Pickering, Vicar <cstgabe@stgabrielonline.org>, 503-645-0744
<b>Years since program inception</b>	2 years; 12 adults 6 youth first year, 6 adults 8 youth second year.
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	132
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	Weekly meetings for 2 hours, including lunch, following Sunday service for 14-16 weeks. Followed by a 1 day retreat on the Sunday preceding the Bishop's visit. A program of Christian education led by the laity leading to baptism, confirmation, reaffirmation or reception. Each catechumen is matched with a sponsor who participates fully in the program.
<b>Program schedule</b>	Tried once in Fall and once in Winter-Spring. We would like to stabilize to begin with Advent and go through Easter.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Catechumens and their sponsors and the leaders are presented to the congregation at the beginning of the program. They are presented with Bibles. Every week, the group is prayed for in the Prayers of the People. Haven't used the Book of Occasional Services.
<b>Format</b>	Each meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening prayer</li> <li>• Check-in</li> <li>• Small group scripture reflection</li> <li>• Break</li> <li>• Topic discussion</li> <li>• Closing prayer</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	Our topic discussion time format is a brief intro to a topic or a short presentation followed by discussion & Q/A. The balance is between information and personal reflection and inquiry. Topics included: Anglicanism, creeds, liturgical calendar, prayer, baptism, renunciations, affirmations and ministry.
<b>Roles</b>	Program led by laypersons but with clergy involvement. Deacon or vicar attends each session. None of the laity are licensed catechists.
<b>Special features</b>	The emphases are to introduce people to the perspectives of and the tools for living a Christian life and to form a starting point for the discernment of Christian ministry for each person.
<b>Outreach persons</b>	

# St John the Baptist, Portland

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Portland
<b>Contact Person</b>	The Rev. Robert Bryant and Mary Dorscheimer church telephone: 503-245-3777; church email: <stjohn@oes.edu>
<b>Years since program inception</b>	17+; numbers vary greatly from year to year, from 2 to 12.
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	163
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	This is program that is offered to the parish for those seeking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• baptismal candidacy</li> <li>• renewal of Baptismal vows</li> <li>• preparation for reception into Church and/or Confirmation</li> </ul> <p>The major focus is on elements of Anglicanism and faith journey practices. Each catechumen has a sponsor accompanying her or him through the entire process.</p> <p>The program meets weekly for 2 hours at varying times, but mostly after principal Eucharist on Sundays, normally including lunch.</p>
<b>Program schedule</b>	Begin in Advent and end with Easter vigil. Have considered prefacing the whole with an inquirer's class, but not yet tried.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Follow usages given in the Book of Occasional Services. Lectionary Gospel reflection in each session.
<b>Format</b>	½ small group reflection on Lectionary Gospel selection; ½ on a series of topic presentations
<b>Content</b>	Topics include: concepts of orthodoxy; history of the Church; Book of Common Prayer – history and use; thinking through all aspects of the Baptismal covenant; suggested aids to prayer life and spiritual growth. Some small group sharing.
<b>Roles</b>	Primarily lay led, with some topics led by clergy
<b>Special features</b>	Emphasis on social justice and spiritual discipline
<b>Outreach persons</b>	None

# St John the Evangelist, Milwaukee

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Milwaukee
<b>Contact Person</b>	Rev. Anthony (Bud) Thurston, Interim Rector rector@stjohnsmilwaukee.org 503-653-5880
<b>Years since program inception</b>	5; currently in transition and development under guidance from new rector
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	105; 15-20 adults per year (approx. half catechumens and half persons seeking reaffirmation of baptismal vows and/or Confirmation)
<b>Brief description</b>	Preparation for baptism or baptismal renewal (includes confirmation) through informal presentations and discussion involving scripture, prayer, story telling and teaching. Sponsors/mentors for catechumens.
<b>Program schedule</b>	2-3 months, possibly beginning early Epiphany and concluding with confirmation around Pentecost. Previously met Sunday afternoons 12-2 PM, with snacks; may be changed to weekday evening.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Use of Book of Occasional Services
<b>Format</b>	Open ended process involving presentation followed by small group discussion, sharing of spiritual journeys, and prayer. Possibly some study of Scripture.  Service activities are encouraged.
<b>Content</b>	Topics of presentations include Prayer Book, faith issues, history, theology, spirituality, and ethics
<b>Roles</b>	Led by rector led and selected lay catechists.
<b>Special features</b>	
<b>Outreach persons</b>	

# St Michael and All Angels, Portland

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Portland
<b>Contact Person</b>	Georgia Beardsley and Kathy Buhl 503-284-7141, <office@stmaa.org>
<b>Years since program inception</b>	15; 7-9 average per year
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	372
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	<p>The catechumenate is both a personal and communal process of faith formation and practice that finds its roots in the early church and focuses on spiritual development through the disciplines of faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate worship</li> <li>• Study of scripture</li> <li>• Prayer</li> <li>• Living our baptismal promises</li> </ul> <p>“An apprenticeship in living the Christian faith.” Each candidate and catechumen has sponsor. Meets 1-3:30 PM every Sunday from Advent to Pentecost when Bishop comes. 2 Saturdays in retreat.</p>
<b>Program schedule</b>	Begins on Advent 1 with welcome to catechumens and sponsors.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Sponsors and catechumens sit together during service. Catechumens are prayed for by name during Prayers of the People Rites of Admission and Enrollment are incorporated into Sunday liturgy.
<b>Format</b>	<p>Each Sunday meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing a short Taize piece, followed by ‘check in’.</li> <li>• Small group reflection on Gospel for following Sunday.</li> <li>• Short social time</li> <li>• Sharing of insights</li> <li>• Hymn</li> <li>• Shared prayer of blessing</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	
<b>Roles</b>	Rector is a member of the formation team. The members of the team, both clergy and lay, take turns facilitating a process of learning and discovery
<b>Special features</b>	
<b>Outreach persons</b>	Members of formation team have offered presentations or led workshops as part of regional catechumenate training events, and are happy to continue to do so.

# Sts Peter and Paul, Portland

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Portland
<b>Contact Person</b>	Malcolm Heath, Dcn. Tracy LeBlanc, Tamara West 503-254-8168
<b>Years since program inception</b>	11, with perhaps a 1 year hiatus. 9-11 persons per year. Currently suspended; seeking to develop a new approach to formation.
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	100-115 (2 English, 1 Spanish liturgies)
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	Lectionary-based, team-led adult formation process heavily tied to liturgical year observing public rites. "Classic" catechumenate based on Book of Occasional Services guideline, heavily influenced by Roman Catholic RCIA. Tuesdays 7-9 PM (subject to change after Advent). Each catechumen has a sponsor/mentor throughout the process.
<b>Program schedule</b>	Starting Advent 2008, extending through Eastertide 2009, meeting once per week,
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Rites including admission, candidacy for Baptism, blessings, assistance with footwashing, imposition of ashes all according to BOS.
<b>Format</b>	Simple form of evening Office; some points for reflection offered but very sparingly; "appreciative" model of Bible Study alternating with more formal group-lectio style; Q and A portion made room for at end of evening. Service activities already built into parish life.
<b>Content</b>	Again, Sunday lectionary the basic "text", minimal guidance or "points" offered. NOT primarily a "didactic" setting.
<b>Roles</b>	Team approach and planning; deacon part of team; rector part of team but does not convene; have inquired into licensure of catechist but Diocese at the time not responsive.
<b>Special features</b>	Discipleship. Other aspects come up naturally and organically in due course.
<b>Outreach persons</b>	Team members. We've served as consultants before, years ago.

# Church of the Resurrection, Eugene

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Eugene
<b>Contact Persons</b>	The Rev. Tasha Garrison. Nancy Gallagher <cor@efn.org> 541-686-8462
<b>Years since program inception</b>	Active from 2003-2007; presently suspended to invest energy in a strong adult education program. Open to an inter-parish program in the Eugene area.
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	101. When active, 7 or so participants per year, mostly members seeking deeper formation.
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	Preparation for baptism, reaffirmation and spiritual growth. Begins in fall with an Inquirer's group. Each catechumen (candidate for baptism) would have a sponsor for the entire program. Other participants served as sponsors for each other. Strong sense of community and mutual support built up over the program. (Present adult ed program is a fruit of this activity.)
<b>Program schedule</b>	Program ran from Advent to Easter and Pentecost. Wednesday early evenings; sometimes with snacks and desert, sometimes with a simple meal around soup.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Candidates prayed for in weekly services. Book of Occasional Services used for liturgical affirmation and support.
<b>Format</b>	Informal small group discussion led by lay leader.
<b>Content</b>	Started with sharing of spiritual journey stories; some book study, moving more and more to a study of the Gospel lectionary reading.
<b>Roles</b>	Totally lay led.
<b>Special features</b>	None
<b>Outreach persons</b>	Nancy Gallagher

# St Timothy, Salem

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Salem
<b>Contact Person</b>	Mike McFetridge, lay catechist <trillium1949@comcast.net> , 503-390-0314
<b>Years since program inception</b>	28; 4-6 persons per year
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	108
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	This is a process that intends to bring about Christian formation (not just information). This process is described as the heart of the parish. Each catechumen and confirmation candidate is provided with a sponsor/mentor to accompany them through the entire process, help incorporate them into the parish, and help catechists know their needs and readiness.
<b>Program schedule</b>	First stage is a seven-week series, teaching newcomers about Christianity and the church. At the end of the first stage, the newcomer group is introduced to the catechumenate and each person is invited to continue on. Coordinated with liturgical year to culminate in Easter and Pentecost. Meets Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:30 PM at church, no meal. After Easter meet in people's homes, usually with food.
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	Following the Book of Occasional Services at primary Sunday Eucharist.
<b>Format</b>	Less time is spent on providing answers and more time spent on exploring questions. Personal stories. Sessions start with Evening Prayer and move to reflection on the lectionary, particularly the Gospel from the previous Sunday. To the greatest extent possible, they follow the experience-reflection model; that is, the participants experience the rites first and then reflect on them.
<b>Content</b>	The seven week newcomer stage is information-driven with a presenter for each week. During the following Catechumenate proper, the only content is the Scriptures, organized by the lectionary, small group sharing, and prayer.
<b>Roles</b>	Lay led. 6 catechists share the work of organizing and teaching the process.
<b>Special features</b>	10% of active church membership involved directly in process
<b>Outreach persons</b>	Mike McFetridge, Jana McFerron, and Kathryn Lucht.

# Trinity Cathedral, Portland

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Portland
<b>Contact Person</b>	Canon Marianne Borg cathedraloffice@trinity-episcopal.org 503-222-9811
<b>Years since program inception</b>	
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	613; 35-40 people a year, split between catechumens and persons seeking formation/reaffirmation of baptismal vows.
<b>Brief description</b>	Basic Christian formation, intellectual and spiritual. Participants are linked in small groups (4-6 people) with mentors.
<b>Program schedule</b>	Begins Saturday before the Presentation of Our Lord in Epiphany Opening day-long retreat; 4 ½ months of weekly evening classes with a closing day-long retreat. Ends with baptisms/Confirmations/Receptions/re-affirmations on Trinity Sunday
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	
<b>Format</b>	Weekly meetings are 1 ½ hour preceded by Eucharist and common meal. Mostly small group discussion format, occasioned by a presentation on a specific topic..
<b>Content</b>	Topics include Biblical interpretation and church history; sacramental theology and liturgy; prayer and spiritual discipline; mission and ministry.
<b>Roles</b>	Class led by members of staff (clergy and lay) and lay leadership (wardens, treasurer, abbot of lay Benedictine order and volunteer ministry coordinator).
<b>Special features</b>	
<b>Outreach persons</b>	

# Phinney Ridge Lutheran, Seattle

Information compiled 2009

<b>City</b>	Seattle
<b>Contact Person</b>	The Rev. Bev Piro <bpiro@prlc.org> , 206-783-2350
<b>Years since program inception</b>	16. Currently approximately 35 persons per year.
<b>Parish size (Avg. Sunday attendance)</b>	Approximately 800 Baptized members. Two large Sunday morning worship liturgies.
<b>Brief description (Supplied by parish)</b>	The Way is a process of faith formation for all people. The process endeavors to meet newcomers wherever they are in their journey of faith, connect them to active congregational members (each has a sponsor/mentor for the entire process) and nurture growth in faith by practicing the life-long practices of faith: corporate worship, prayer, study of scripture and Christian living.
<b>Program schedule</b>	Begin to meet on a near weekly basis (5-7 pm Sundays over provided meal) in the Fall and ends on Pentecost
<b>Liturgical coordination</b>	As the entire community is founded through the historic liturgy of the faith, those coming to faith are held before the congregation in prayer and support at numerous points along their journey through the Way (following ELCA Provisional Rites and Renewing Worship Series)
<b>Format</b>	First meet for a common meal (provided), a short organizational meeting followed by breaking into 5 or 6 small groups. Small group aural Bible study ( <i>lectio divina</i> entrance to the scriptures to engage the gospel lessons through the year) and personal reflections, ending in prayer for one another.
<b>Content</b>	Entire emphasis is on learning to live the Christian life informed by listening to God in Scripture and sharing together and praying for one another. No focus on doctrine or church history.
<b>Roles</b>	All catechists and group leaders are lay. Clergy serve as advisors, program directors, resource people, liturgists and counselors.
<b>Special features</b>	
<b>Outreach persons</b>	Bev Piro