



# Notre Dame Catechist Academy

## Program Year 2021-2022

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Thank you for your interest in the Notre Dame Catechist Academy! Situated within the McGrath Institute for Church Life (MICL), the Catechist Academy supports the larger mission of the MICL—to **renew the Catholic Imagination to serve the Church**. We partner with the catechetical leadership of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to serve parishes in the greater South Bend/Mishawaka community.

In that light, we are committed to not only providing you with theological and practical groundings for this ministry, but ample space to imaginatively and creatively discover how to use your passions, interests and skills to lead students into a deeper understanding of and relationship with Jesus Christ.

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## Basic Program Information

### Placement

· *Where and who will I serve?*

You will work in any number of partner parishes in South Bend/Mishawaka serving a variety of students, all the way from Kindergarten to Confirmation age (typically 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade). There is a *possibility* of some other catechetical placements in RCIA, Youth Ministry and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as well as ministry to those with special needs (*see page 5*).

· *Will I get to pick where I serve?*

You get a LARGE say in the process. Beginning in 2018, the Diocese of FWSB began working with area parishes to determine their catechetical needs and to find available placements. This process will remain the same for 2021-2022. After those are finalized, we will do our best to match you with a placement that will be a good fit for you.

To do this, we gauge your interest in working with a particular age group and the times that you are available to serve. Also, particular qualifications and background experience like Spanish speaking ability helps to narrow the choices in regards to the particular parish in which you will serve.

· ***Will I serve with someone?***

The best answer here is: **it depends!** In many placements, catechists will serve with someone else, so you will not be by yourself in the classroom. You might serve with another catechist (Notre Dame student) from the Catechist Academy, or with a catechist in the parish. We can match you based on your comfort or ability or who you would like to serve with. We do, however, have students who lead classrooms by themselves. It's all up to you!

· ***Do I need a car?***

No! Having a car is not required. We place people together in placements at similar times so that those who have a car will be able to carpool & take care of those catechists who do not have a car! If you do have a car, however, your assistance with carpool/transportation would be greatly appreciated!

· ***So, I'm going abroad in the Fall/Spring? Can I still serve?***

No problem. There are always catechists going abroad! We normally are able to accommodate those catechists who are leaving and those who are coming back. Just please make note of this on the application form so we can plan ahead of time!

· ***What does the time commitment look like?***

You should plan on *at least* 3-5 hours a week. This accounts for time in the classroom, time spent planning & time spent going to and from your placement site. If this is a new ministry for you, be gentle on yourself and allow some more time for lesson-planning and reflection. **There are weekend as well as weekday placements, although many of our placements occur on Sunday mornings.**

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## **Teaching**

· ***I'm nervous about teaching! Do I have to be an experienced teacher or catechist to participate in the Catechist Academy?***

No experience is required! You will be supported regardless of your previous teaching/catechetical experience. New and returning catechists will have the support of (*and are required to attend*) an orientation session and two workshops in the Fall 2021. These 1.5 hour workshops will be run by staff from the McGrath Institute and will

introduce many important practical and theological concepts that will be essential for success in catechetical ministry. Not to mention, we will have a lot of fun too! *Dates TBD.*

Most importantly, we have three different levels of responsibility that we use to place you in a classroom role designed to accommodate your time availability and desired commitment (see page 6).

- ***If I'm a new catechist, does that mean I have to start as an Assistant Catechist?***

Absolutely not! Depending on the type of role you would like to play in the classroom, we will work with you to make it possible. Our workshops and extensive mentorship should be enough to support you no matter what level you would like to begin.

- ***Ongoing Support***

Scott Boyle, the Catechist Academy coordinator and a staff of “Mentor-Observers” provide ongoing individual support and opportunities for consultations. Each catechist will be visited twice throughout the program year and will receive a detailed write-up in the week following. This report will form the basis for a personal one-on-one conversation each semester. Catechists are invited to seek additional support from staff whenever it is needed!

- ***Who are these Mentor-Observers?***

Each of these mentors has some sort of catechetical background in either education or religious education. They have been specially trained and are excited to get to walk with you! They are there for support and for outreach at any time you might need!

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## **Odds and Ends**

- ***How many people will serve in the Catechist Academy for 2021-2022?***

We anticipate placing at least 45 students depending on interest and availability.

- ***When should I submit my application? Is it competitive?***

We will be filling spots for catechists on a rolling basis based on available placements, previous experience and need. So, if this sounds like something you are interested in, don't wait to apply. We are usually able to accommodate everyone who is interested!

- *I love this stuff! I'm interested in going a bit deeper.*

### *The Echo Program*

If you're interested in looking a bit farther into the future, Scott oversees the recruitment and admissions process for the Echo Program, a two-year tuition-free graduate program in Theology. Through the Echo program, you have the opportunity to earn a Master of Arts in Theology at the University of Notre Dame while serving in a parish or school in one of the Echo partner dioceses located throughout the United States. Echo students benefit from a robust formation program that integrates their work, study and life of faith to serve the Church and explore a career in ministry. Students live, learn from and serve the catechetical mission of the Church. You can contact Scott at any time at [sboyle2@nd.edu](mailto:sboyle2@nd.edu) or 574-631-0459 if you'd be interested in learning more. Students from the Catechist Academy make great candidates and are frequently the most competitive applicants for the program!

- *When will I know if I have been accepted into the Catechist Academy?*

We will be in contact with everyone who has applied with a notification of your acceptance to the Catechist Academy as well as a notification of your initial placements. These placements are subject to change based on parish need.

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### **Signing-Up!**

Sign-up by following the link below!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/21-22catechistacademy>

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### **Additional Questions?**

E-mail Scott Boyle at [sboyle2@nd.edu](mailto:sboyle2@nd.edu) or call 574-631-0459.

## Other Catechetical Placements

*Although not guaranteed, there is a possibility that the Catechist Academy will be able to offer a few other catechetical placements in addition to classroom catechesis. On your application, please **select** those ministries that would be of interest to you. If we are not able to offer these placements this year, your interest in these positions will help us to gauge demand for future years.*

### **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd derives from the work of two Roman Catholic laywomen in Rome: Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi, who were inspired by the educational principles of Maria Montessori.

Children gather in one of three levels (organized by age: 3-6; 6-9; 9-12) in a special classroom referred to as the Atrium. This prepared sacred space contains beautiful, yet simple materials that aide the child in developing a relationship with God and an understanding of life in the church. Children are invited to engage in “works” (lessons and materials) that engage the child’s imagination and senses to invite them into a deeper relationship with God. Those in this placement would serve as an assistant with someone who has been trained in the methods of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

### **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Ministry**

Each year, the RCIA helps to prepare catechumens (those who are seeking to be baptized into the Catholic Church) and candidates (those who have been baptized, but have not received their First Communion or Confirmation in the Catholic Church). Students in this placement would participate as a team member for a parish’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Students could expect (among other things) to serve by assisting the Director of Religious Education by contributing content, assisting/leading small groups, and other duties as assigned. This is a ministry where you would interact with folks of different ages, most likely high school age to mature adults.

### **Youth Ministry**

Each Youth Ministry program is different, but participants who engage in this placement will have the opportunity to meaningfully assist (alongside a Director of Youth Ministry) with Youth Ministry programming. This can consist of, but is not limited to, leading prayer, presenting talks, leading small groups, learning and assisting with behind the scenes preparations. Most times, Youth Ministry is separated into high school age (grades 9-12) and middle school (grades 7-8).

### **Children of St. Angela Merici**

Under the patronage of St. Angela Merici, the Children of St. Angela Merici (CSAM) is a program designed to meet the religious education and faith formation needs of children and adults with disabilities and other special needs. Using a hands-on approach to learning, CSAM is dedicated to providing our students access to the fullness of the faith in all its richness. The class content is custom-tailored to the needs and abilities of each child, and the catechist/aide to student ratio is nearly one-to-one to facilitate better learning.

Catechist Academy Placements | 2021-2022

Catechist Academy Placements   2021-2022	
<b>Capacity (Assignment)</b>	<b>Primary Catechist</b>
Participation	Active teaching and classroom responsibilities is to be expected a majority of the time.
Description	Students who choose this option will be responsible for overall teaching and facilitation within the classroom space. While students will most likely serve as co-catechists (either with someone from the parish or Notre Dame), they may have (or look forward to) the opportunity to manage a classroom by themselves. Consistent attendance and communication is required.
<b>Capacity (Assignment)</b>	<b>Co-Catechist</b>
Participation	Active teaching and classroom responsibilities are shared with another catechist. Active teaching is to be expected at least 50% of the time.
Description	Students who select this option can expect to share teaching and lesson planning responsibilities with another catechist, either with someone at the parish or with another Notre Dame student. Consistent attendance and communication is expected and required.
<b>Capacity (Assignment)</b>	<b>Assistant Catechist</b>
Participation	Active classroom responsibilities are in support of the primary catechist. Active teaching responsibilities comprise no more than 50% of the role.
Description	While 'formal' lesson planning may be the responsibility of the primary catechist, students who are open to this option can expect opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the classroom while supporting the primary catechist in an auxiliary capacity. Catechists in this role may find themselves working more individually with students to build classroom culture and support the goals of the primary catechist. Consistent attendance and communication required.

# Catechetical Support

## *Fall 2021, Spring 2022*

### Orientation Session

#### **Description:**

Students will receive an overview and orientation to the year.

*Attendance at one session is REQUIRED.*

- 1) **Thursday, August 26th** from **6:00-8:00pm**
- 2) **Tuesday, August 31st** from **6:00-8:00pm**

### Catechist Mentor-Observer Meetings (over the course of the semester)

#### **Description:**

Students will also benefit from an assigned mentor who will meet with them to reflect practically and theologically on their catechetical service throughout the year.

- Intro meeting with Mentor before placement visit
- Debrief meeting after placement visit