

Policy on Approved Catechetical Texts for the Formation of Catechumens and the Formation of Candidates for Reception Into Full Communion

Policy for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

If the catechesis of catechumens and/or candidates is aided by the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (hereafter “the Catechism”), the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, or another text based on the Catechism, then that text does not need approval by the archbishop or his delegate.

The only time a text needs approval by the archbishop or his delegate is when the text is not the Catechism, the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, or another text based on the Catechism.

The parish pastor will determine if a text is based on the Catechism.

If you wish to use a text for the formation of catechumens and/or candidates that is not based on the Catechism, you must submit it to the Center for the New Evangelization (hereafter “CNE”) for approval, by emailing the title and author of the text to cne@catholicaoc.org.

Explanation

In the National Statutes (2024) of the OCIA, there are norms that require a new approach from parish ministry leaders and a new response from diocesan ministry leaders engaged in initiation ministry. One of these norms concerns the catechetical texts that are used during the initiation process.

In the National Statutes (1988) of the RCIA, norm 7 read as follows:

A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life, aided by approved catechetical texts, is to be provided during the period of the catechumenate (see RCIA, no. 75).

In the National Statutes (2024) of the OCIA, catechumens (those who are normatively participating in the “period of the catechumenate”) are still aided by approved catechetical texts, but now the National Statutes indicate that the one granting the approval is “the local ordinary,” as opposed to, for example, the Doctrinal Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, or the doctrinal authority who issued the Nihil Obstat and/or Imprimatur on the text itself.

Here are the relevant norms from the 2024 National Statutes:

Norm 6 The formation of catechumens is to be comprehensive. It is to be:

1° suited to the liturgical year and supported by the Church’s liturgy;

2° rooted in Sacred Scripture, the truths of Catholic doctrine and the moral life, and aided by catechetical texts, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, texts based upon that Catechism, such as the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, and other texts approved by the local ordinary;

3° exercised in works of service and charity (OCIA 75).

Norm 17 It is for the diocesan bishop:

3° to approve the use of catechetical texts for the formation of catechumens and candidates for Reception into full communion (see Norm 6, 2° above);

Norm 17 provides another new piece of information, which is that the local ordinary approves catechetical texts not only for use in forming catechumens, but also in forming candidates for Reception into full communion. As such, it is necessary to establish how the local ordinary (in our case, the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or his delegate) will approve these catechetical texts.

Criteria for Approved Catechetical Texts

From the norms above, we can establish the following criteria:

- The formation of catechumens and candidates must be aided by catechetical texts
- A text is considered catechetical if it:
 - is itself the Catechism,
 - is based upon that Catechism (such as the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults), or
 - is some other text approved by the local ordinary

This means that *if the text is the Catechism, the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, or another text based on the Catechism, then it does not need approval by the archbishop or his delegate.*

The only time a text needs approval by the archbishop or his delegate is when the text is not the Catechism, the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, or another text based on the Catechism.

In acknowledgement of the authority that pastors have over the catechesis that is provided in their parishes (cf. CIC 773-780), *we leave it to the parish pastor to determine when a text is based upon the Catechism.*

Although this is not an exhaustive list, here are some ways in which a text is typically based on the Catechism:

- If it quotes or refers to articles or paragraphs from the Catechism
- If the author is clearly attempting to put these articles or paragraphs in his or her own words. For example:
 - Fr. John A Hardon, SJ, *The Catholic Catechism: A Contemporary Catechism of the Teachings of the Catholic Church*
 - Alan Schreck, Ph.D., *The Essential Catholic Catechism: A Readable, Comprehensive Catechism of the Catholic Faith*
 - Peter Kreeft, Ph.D., *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of Catholic Church Beliefs Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- If the doctrinal topics in the text are arranged according to the four pillars of the Catechism, these being:
 - The Profession of Faith
 - The Celebration of the Christian Mystery
 - Life in Christ

- Christian Prayer
- If it takes the content from the Catechism and presents it in a different format. For example:
 - *Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which presents the Catechism in question-and-answer format
 - *YOUCAT: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which also presents the Catechism in question-and-answer format
- If it utilizes some combination of the above approaches.

If you wish to use a text for the formation of catechumens and/or candidates that is not based on the Catechism, then you must submit it to the CNE for approval, by emailing the title and author of the text to cne@catholicaoc.org.

If you are not sure if a text is based on the Catechism, you may submit it to the CNE for consideration as well.

May God bless your every effort to provide a comprehensive catechesis that forms and prepares catechumens and candidates for initiation and reception into the Catholic Church.