

The Lay Formation Program of the Archdiocese of Dubuque

The vision of the Lay Formation Program in the Archdiocese of Dubuque springs from the overall mission of the archdiocese. Those who direct and contribute to this program do so with an understanding and care that their work animates the ecclesial mission of the local Church.

Lay Formation Program Vision

Laypersons are invited to lifelong faith formation to help them discern and respond to the call of the Holy Spirit to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Lay Formation Program deepens and integrates knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith tradition, invites personal and spiritual maturity, and assists persons to identify and more fully respond to their baptismal vocation of service as laypersons within the church and the world. This vision supports and fosters a new generation of lay leaders witnessing to Christ by their service of humanity throughout the local church and the world.

The layperson's faith formation journey is assisted through the broad curriculum of the archdiocesan three-year Lay Formation Program including monthly education and faith formation sessions, annual retreats, spiritual companioning, gifts discernment, journaling, prayer, and service to the parish and surrounding community.

Learning Objectives

Guided by the theological foundations for ministry formation approved by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the learning objectives for the Archdiocese of Dubuque Lay Formation Program encompass:

Personal and Spiritual Maturity

- Integrate an understanding of the spiritual life in relation to God, self, others, the world, and creation.
- Deepen an integrated spirituality formed by Scripture, the sacramental life, prayer and communal worship, theological reflection, and action on behalf of justice.
- Discern one's charisms and respond to the call of the Holy Spirit to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Explore how faith develops individually and through family and how these experiences shape one's capacity to grow in faith.

Archdiocesan Mission Statement

We the Church of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, are God's people gathering together as a Eucharistic community to worship, sharing the Word of God, affirming traditional and emerging leadership roles and supporting families to model Catholic faith and morality for the next generation.

We commit ourselves to lifelong faith formation and to the service of humanity because we believe in the Risen Christ, in the wisdom and kindness of God, the author of life and in the love the Holy Spirit bestows.

We Envision... This faith and these principles inspired us to envision a Church in which we ...are disciples of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a community "devoted to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and prayers," zealous in caring for the needs of others. (Acts 1:8; 2:42; 4:34) ...are a people in whom the biblical Word of God finds rich soil, flourishes in the truth of Catholic teaching and produces a harvest of holiness and social justice. (Luke 8:8; 6:45) ... are ministered to by faith-filled and qualified persons in leadership who imitate the Good Shepherd and are "worthy of their hire." (1 Peter 5:1-4, Matthew 10:10) ...support families, in various forms, striving to be domestic churches which instill Catholic faith and morality in the hearts of the next generation. (Ephesians 5:21-6:4).

- Identify personal gifts and challenges through self-reflection and spiritual companionship.
- Relate respectfully with a diversity of persons, age groups, and cultures.
- Discern and address current realities in the church and the world in light of the Gospel within an understanding of theological worldviews.
- Engage in personal, life-long faith formation and continuing education.

Integration of Roman Catholic Theology

- Utilize the insights of Scripture and tradition as a sacred resource for discovering God's story of salvation and what it reveals for one's daily work as a disciple. (theology of revelation)
- Know how a Christian theology of God as revealed and understood in Jesus Christ shapes the meaning of one's life (i.e., salvation and redemption) and work in the church and in the world. (theology of God)
- Explore the nature and structure of the Catholic Church, the role of the Holy Spirit in shaping the ongoing communion and evangelizing mission of the Church through history, and understanding with greater clarity what it means to be a disciple in a post-Vatican II church. (theology of church)
- Identify key principles and characteristics of Roman Catholic liturgy and worship with special attention to the centrality of Eucharist in shaping Christian life. (Theology of liturgy/worship)
- Explain foundational principles shaping the sacramentality of the Catholic Christian life, the meaning of sacraments, and how sacramental celebrations open one to an experience of grace in daily life. (theology of sacrament)
- Relate how principles of Catholic moral teaching, including Catholic social teaching, reshape personal life, an understanding of contemporary life issues, and thus an active participation in the transformation of church and society. (theology of the moral life)
- Appreciate Catholic spirituality and prayer in diverse forms and multi-cultural expressions. (theology of Catholic spirituality)
- Promote a respectful understanding of ecumenism and other faith traditions by identifying the historical background of the church's moments of separation and its efforts toward unity. (theology of religious dialogue)

Living the Mission

- Clarify the unique evangelizing and ministerial role of the layperson in the church and in the world.
- Discern, articulate, and accept one's unique baptismal vocation as coming from God and confirmed by the ecclesial community.
- Identify one's own mission as participating in the mission of Christ in and through the community of the church.
- Develop a servant lifestyle that integrates Gospel values and utilizes one's charisms.
- Collaborate and lead based on the example of Jesus within one's own church community, and within other ecumenical and secular settings.
- Learn to utilize common ecclesial resources (e.g., Catechism for Adults, Bible commentaries and dictionaries, Liturgy of the Hours, Blessings, etc.) that support a life of faith and faith sharing in community.