



# ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK YOUTH FAITH FORMATION



## *Order of Blessing Within Mass*

This ceremony for the blessing and commissioning of catechists is intended to take place at the Eucharistic liturgy on Catechetical Sunday. If this is not possible, the blessing and commissioning may be celebrated at Mass at another time, or it may be used outside of Mass, perhaps with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours or at a simple commissioning service. The rite of blessing that follows is from the Book of Blessings, chapter 4, section I, "Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists." In the homily, the celebrant gives an explanation of the celebration of catechesis that is based on the sacred text.

Following the homily, the celebrant, deacon, or other suitable minister calls the catechists to come forward, either individually by name or as a group. The celebrant may then introduce the blessing, using the following or other similar words.

### **INTRODUCTION OF CATECHISTS**

The celebrant addresses the assembly.

### **CELEBRANT:**

*For the pastoral activity of the Church, the cooperation of a great many people is needed, so that communities as well as individuals may advance to full maturity in faith and continually show forth their faith through the celebration of the liturgy, through study, and through their manner of life. This cooperation is provided by those who devote themselves to catechesis. Enlightened by God's Word and the teaching of the Church, catechists impart to others an initiation or a deeper formation in those realities that they themselves have learned as truths to be followed in living and to be celebrated in liturgy. In this celebration we will bless the name of the Lord for giving us such co-workers and pray that through the Holy Spirit they will receive the grace they need in their service to the Church.*

### **BLESSING OF CATECHISTS**

Addressing catechists new to the ministry, a deacon or veteran catechist says the following:

*Would those who are willing to serve as catechists in [name of parish] please stand?*

Or ask them to come forward, depending on the number and the place.

*Those who dedicate themselves to the ministry of catechesis play a vital role in the pastoral activity of the Church. Enlightened by the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, and inspired by their own life of prayer and witness, catechists lead others to know the living Jesus Christ through word and deed. Through the ministry of catechesis, catechists provide a process of initiation and formation for those in their care, introducing them to the truths of faith that they themselves have learned, lived, and celebrated.*

*In this celebration we will bless the name of the Lord for giving us such collaborators and we will pray that through the Holy Spirit they receive the grace they need in their service to the Church.*

**CELEBRANT:**

*Now I ask you, are you willing to exercise the ministry of catechesis here at [name of parish]?*

**CATECHISTS:**

*With the help of God, I am ready and willing to serve as a catechist along with all the catechists of this parish.*

**CELEBRANT:**

*May God help you to be good stewards to what has been entrusted to you, and may you and all the catechists who serve in this parish receive the grace you need for your service here at [name of parish].*

**GENERAL INTERCESSIONS**

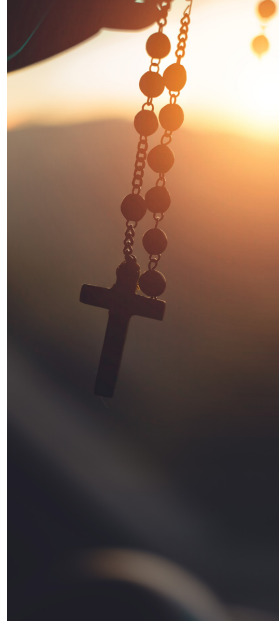
The general intercessions follow the introduction to the blessing. These intercessions may be used in whole or in part. Always include your own intentions for local needs.

**CELEBRANT:**

*God created us to live and grow in love. By being stewards of God's gifts, we take an active part in bringing this vision of life into being. Confident in the power of prayer to transform us, we bring our needs to God who hears and answers us.*

**ASSISTING MINISTER:**

The response is "Lord, hear our prayer."



*For the Church: May it grow stronger in its resolve to welcome and embrace those who are living on the margins of society. For this, we pray to the Lord: R/.*

*For the leaders of nations: May their first concern be to preserve and foster peace through compassionate policies and just systems. For this, we pray to the Lord: R/.*

*For those who suffer from physical and mental illness: May they be healed through God's infinite mercy and be comforted by those who care for them. For this, we pray to the Lord: R/.*

*For families: May they grow stronger in their love and commitment to one another. For this, we pray to the Lord: R/.*

*For catechists: May they be blessed with creativity and enthusiasm as stewards of God's gifts. For this, we pray to the Lord: R/.*

**BLESSING**

The blessing of catechists follows the general intercessions. As an alternative, the prayer of blessing may be used at the end of Mass after an invitation such as, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

With hands outstretched, the celebrant prays the blessing for the catechists.

**CELEBRANT:**

*With your fatherly blessing, Lord, strengthen these servants of yours in their resolve to dedicate themselves as catechists. Grant that they will strive to share with others what they themselves derive from pondering your Word and studying the Church's teaching. And let them gladly join those they teach in honoring and serving your name. We ask this through Christ our Lord. R/. Amen.*

**OR****CELEBRANT:**

*Lord God, source of all wisdom and knowledge, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us and to proclaim his message of faith, hope, and love to all nations. In your goodness, bless our brothers and sisters who have offered themselves as catechists for your Church. Strengthen them with your gifts that they may teach by word and by example the truth that comes from you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. R/. Amen.*

After the prayer of blessing, each catechist may be presented with a Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and/or a certificate of commissioning. If desirable, the congregation may signify its support by applause, an acclamation, or an appropriate hymn.

Note: Some parishes offer a "Response Sunday" the week after Catechetical Sunday. On that day, following the homily, the celebrant reminds the community of the commissioning of the catechists. He asks the community to respond to the parish catechetical ministry by pledging to give it the support and involvement it deserves. A statement of "I do" from the community may be the affirmative response.