

A quick history

1935

Catholic Home Study is a Catholic ministry offering free correspondence courses on the Catholic Faith. It is sponsored by the Missouri Knights of Columbus and by a Catholic community of priests and brothers founded by St. Vincent De Paul called the Vincentians. Its origins go back to 1935, when Fr. Lester Fallon, C.M. and Fr. Joseph McIntyre, C.M. began to do street preaching in small towns in Southern Missouri.

There were few Catholics and no priests in these towns, and residents knew little about the Catholic Church. Fathers Fallon and McIntyre would put up posters to announce their coming. They would arrive in a truck equipped with a pulpit and public address system, and would preach for several evenings in front of the post office, courthouse, or general store. They explained Catholic doctrine and answered questions.



Many people who heard the preaching expressed an interest in learning more about the Catholic Church. To help them, Fr. Fallon came up with the idea of offering religion courses by mail. Soon large numbers of people were applying, and Fr. Fallon established Confraternity Home Study Service on Lindell Boulevard in St. Louis. When World War II started, soldiers from all over the world requested the course, and the ministry expanded rapidly.

1944

In 1944 the Knights of Columbus began to offer financial assistance. They sponsored ads in secular magazines reaching most households in the USA. From 1948 to 1971, over six million people responded to the ads, requesting pamphlets or enrolling in the instruction course to learn more about the Catholic faith.



1991

In 1991, the Vincentian Community moved Confraternity Home Study Service to St. Mary's Seminary in Perryville, Missouri, and changed its name to Catholic Home Study Service. The work sponsored by the Missouri Knights of Columbus continues as the Religious Information Bureau.

2016

In an effort to care for the environment and lessen its carbon footprint, Catholic Home Study will also be available online and on digital platforms.