



Catholic Trade Schools

There's a new and improved model of post-secondary education spreading across the United States -- the Catholic trade school. This model isn't exactly new, as there are several established Catholic trade schools in Australia, among other countries around the world. These colleges combine a Catholic liberal arts education, to form the minds and character of young men and women, with a solid base of knowledge and practical experience in vocational, technical or trade training. Students are mentored to become upright, faithful, hard-working individuals, bringing Christ to their families, communities and the world through their work.

A Catholic trade school education provides numerous benefits, especially for young men: solid formation in philosophy and the Catholic faith from other Catholic men; vastly reduced -- or eliminated -- college debt; a lucrative, honest profession that serves the community and will support a family; and much more. If your son isn't leaning toward a career that requires a university degree, this might be the way to go. See the college websites below and the articles linked at the end for more reasons to seek out a Catholic trade school education.

Here are three Catholic trade schools already up and running in the United States, plus a few more scheduled to open in 2025. Do you know of any others, either here in the US or abroad? Let us know!

Harmel Academy

"Skilled Trades. Great Books. Spiritual Fraternity.

A skilled tradesman can work in many disciplines, but at Harmel, we define "skilled tradesman" as "a man whose way of life is to put things in order"—in his work, in his community, and in his relationship with God. Harmel Academy is a post-secondary academy that trains men in a skilled trade and forms them in their Catholic faith."

- <https://www.harmelacademy.org/>
- 3333 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
- 616-485-2345
- Opened in 2020; men
- Machine and Systems Technology Program (2 years)
"prepares young men to work on full systems within manufacturing and machining environments. With instruction grounded in solid manufacturing theory and deep, practical experience, our students focus on critical thinking through team-oriented, real-world problem solving."
- Foundations of Skilled Stewardship Program (1 year)
"fundamental skills and introductory experiences" in Construction, Welding, Electrical Work, Carpentry, Home maintenance, HVAC, Automotive Repair and Maintenance, Machining, Plumbing
- Humanities Program: God and Man at Work (1 or 2 years)
"through study, discipline, habit, and reflection, men learn to see their calling as men, workers, and family men as an apprenticeship in the Way that is Christ himself. Apprentices take all four semesters, while Gap-Year students take the first two."

Catholic Trade Schools *(continued)*

The College of St. Joseph the Worker

"Learn a trade, earn a degree, and graduate without crippling debt.

The College of St. Joseph the Worker forms students into effective and committed members of their communities by teaching them the Catholic intellectual tradition while training them in skilled and dignified labor. We teach our students to think, but also to pray, to love, and to build."

- <https://www.collegeofstjoseph.com/>
- 424 Washington Street, Steubenville, OH 43952
- (740) 280-2028
- Opened in 2023; men
- Carpentry, HVAC, Electrical, Plumbing
- "Students will receive broad training across all trades offered, as well as in-depth training in their specific trade. In the course of six years, they will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Catholic Studies and be at or near journeyman status in their chosen craft. The program includes three years of study and hands-on training in Steubenville and three years as a full-time apprentice, preferably within our qualified network of master tradesmen in the US."

Santiago Trade School

"Mission: Built upon the solid foundations of work, study & friendship, Santiago Trade School forms young men into excellent Christian tradesmen. We are a community committed to the tough work of gaining practical jobsite wisdom as well as the spiritual wisdom that unites men to Christ."

- <https://www.santiagotradeschool.com/>
- 27912 Baker Canyon Rd, Silverado, Orange County, CA 92676
- Men
- 2 year program: General Construction, Architecture, Design, Blueprints, Foundations, Agriculture, Horticulture, Hydrology, Soil Science, Concrete, Framing, Dry Wall, Insulation, Finishing, Electrical, Lighting, Energy Standards, Plumbing, Interior / Exterior, Landscaping, Commercial, Heating / Air Conditioning, Lath & Plaster, Roofing / Sheet Metal, Heavy Machinery, Automotive, Animal Care, Husbandry
- A Day at Santiago Trade School: 6:30am Lauds -- Breakfast -- Work -- Mass -- Lunch -- Study -- Dinner -- Prayer -- Brotherly Fun -- Lights Out 11:00pm

Kateri College of the Liberal and Practical Arts

"Kateri's liberal arts and practical training will enhance the studies of both in order to graduate students who are learned, well-grounded, ethical, and competent men and women. Our graduates will know their God-given mission in life, be trained to accomplish it, and will be leaders of their local community, the nation, and the Church."

- <https://katericollege.org/>
- P.O. Box 4905, Gallup, NM, 87301
- 505-457-0101
- Expects to open 2025; men and women
- 4-year Bachelor's degree program in Liberal and Practical Arts, with choice of Construction or Carpentry (future offerings: welding, electrical, and diesel mechanics)



Catholic Trade Schools *(continued)*

San Damiano College for the Trades

"Learn a high-skill trade. Earn a degree. Embrace authentic Catholic Life.

We offer a rich variety of vocational paths with an emphasis on restoration and new construction. Intentional community and leisure are daily integrated into a rich spirituality of our Catholic faith."

"Our mission is to form men to recover the dignity of work, integrating it into the whole of a life ordered toward the kingdom of God and the sanctification of the world."

- <https://www.sandamianotrades.org/>
- Springfield, IL
- (217) 622 8994
- Expects to open 2025, men
- 3-year Associate of Liberal Arts program, including technical instruction and on-the-job training in a trade throughout
- Initial trades offered: Carpentry, Ecclesial Restoration, Electrical, Arborist, Roofing
- Future trades to be added: Plumbing & HVAC, Welding & Fabrication, Masonry

Articles

- <https://catholicvote.org/affordable-catholic-trade-schools-flourish/>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/institutions/religious-colleges/2024/02/08/new-catholic-colleges-and-trade-schools-emerge>
- <https://catholicreview.org/new-catholic-trade-schools-prepare-vocational-careers-and-spiritual-vocations/>
- <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/256397/new-catholic-trade-schools-are-sprouting-up-across-the-country-here-are-four>
- <https://www.thecatholichomeschool.com/catholic-homeschooling/high-school/higher-ed/trade-schools/>
- <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/amp/news/257836/a-new-player-in-post-secondary-catholic-education-san-damiano-college-for-the-trades>
- <https://catholicvote.org/diocese-springfield-launches-trade-classical-associates-program/>

