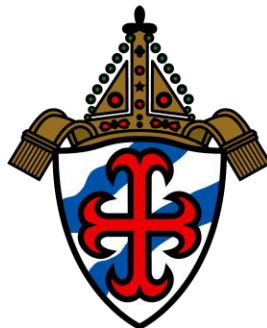




ECHOING THE GOSPEL FOR TEACHERS

Catechetical Certification for Teachers & Principals



SEPTEMBER 1, 2016
DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS
Grand Rapids, MI



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

September 1, 2016

Dear Friends,

I welcome your collaboration in offering our children, youth, and adults the opportunity to encounter Christ through the living truths of the Catholic faith. A revised program of formation and certification for catechetical leaders is now available. **Echoing the Gospel - Catechist Certification Policy and Procedures 2016** and **Echoing the Gospel - Catholic School Teacher Certification Policy and Procedure's 2016** leads those who are called to catechize through a personal experience of transformation. Centered on the person of Jesus Christ it integrates as foundational three dimensions of formation: spirituality of the catechist/teacher, theology, and evangelization.

Some years ago, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the importance of catechesis. Without adequate education in the faith "no lasting and profound evangelization, no growth or maturation, no change in mentalities and cultures is possible. Young people harbor a deep desire for a full life, for genuine love, for constructive freedom; but unfortunately, their expectations are often betrayed and come to nothing." The challenge to lead our children, youth, and adults into the mysteries of the faith, where they will encounter and know Jesus Christ, is the ultimate goal we share in this call to catechize.

I urge you to join me in carrying out this teaching mission of the Church by embracing the multiple opportunities within your grasp as a catechetical leader. Christ Himself empowered the Church to continue His mission of making disciples of all nations. This program of formation and certification is your path to becoming an effective and believable "echo" of God's divine plan made visible for us in Christ Jesus.

Thank you for your generous services and joining me in making the "echo" of the gospel alive.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids

Echoing the Gospel

Pope Francis has given us a vision for Catechesis. As an introduction to the catechetical certification required for all Catechists, Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, Pastoral Associates, RCIA Teams, Catholic School Teachers and Principals in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, it seems right that we should see what Pope Francis has to say to us.

“Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 2013 #164) ¹

We are reminded that the foundation of all we do as Christians is the love of Christ. Before every program, prior to any inspirational conference, above all petty politics or personal clashes of any kind, we do what we do because *Jesus Christ loves you*. This finds its most powerful expression in what Christ did: *he gave his life to save you*. This is not some distant event that is no longer relevant, for *Jesus is living at your side every day* – made present mysteriously through the sacraments and made personal through our ongoing dialogue in prayer. Finally, there must be some element of struggle and personal transformation involved in this; for Christ stands by us for a good purpose: *to enlighten, strengthen and free you*. This is an incredibly powerful summary of what we are trying to pass on to those in our care, by living it out ourselves. It is so important that “all Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma.” (*ibid.* #165) ²

The kerygma gives us insight into *what* we are doing, in *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis reminds us *how* this is to be done. Here he points out that the Church is a family, which must pass on the full store of its memories in a way that nothing is lost.

It is the teacher who must be one “who keeps the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they are able to revive it in others”, like Mary, “who...sees God’s wondrous works in her life...but instead, after receiving the message of the angel and conceiving the Son of God...goes to assist her kinswoman Elizabeth, also pregnant”, and upon encountering her, “the first thing she does...is to recall God’s work, God’s fidelity, in her own life, in the history of her people, in our history...Mary remembers God.” (*Mass at St. Peter’s for Catechists, 29 September 2013*)

The Church has access to a special means for passing on this fullness, one that is capable of “engaging the entire person, body and spirit, interior life and relationships with others.” (*Lumen Fidei*, #40).³ What is this special means? It is none other than what it has always been, “the sacraments, celebrated in the Church’s liturgy.” (*ibid.* #40) Christ is not a distant memory; he is a *real presence*. Our senses give genuine access to the Savior himself, no less now than he was when he travelled the pathways of the Holy Land. The Lord himself, on the road to Emmaus, concretely demonstrates

¹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013, #164.

² *Ibid.*, #165.

³ Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, #40.

this truth. Though Jesus is still present on the earth, even speaking to the disciples, it is not until the sacramental sign, the “breaking of the bread” that they really know who he is! Thus shall it be until the end of time.

Essentially, the pope is drawing attention to the fact that *faith* itself has a sacramental structure: “The awakening of faith is linked to the dawning of a new sacramental sense in our lives as human beings and as Christians, in which visible and material realities are seen to point beyond themselves to the mystery of the eternal.” (*ibid.*)

In *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis makes it clear that what the Church is handing on is not solely a doctrinal content for which a book or the repetition of an idea might suffice. Rather, it is about “the new light born of an encounter with the true God, a light which touches us at the core of our being and engages our minds, wills and emotions, opening us to relationships lived in communion.”⁴

In making this point he has no intention of denigrating the importance of systematically passing on the doctrine of the Church: Since faith is one, it must be professed in all its purity and integrity. Precisely because all the articles of faith are interconnected, to deny one of them, even of those that seem least important, is tantamount to distorting the whole...hence the need for vigilance in ensuring that the deposit of faith is passed on in its entirety...and that all aspects of the profession of faith are duly emphasized (*Lumen Fidei*, #48)⁵.

In Pope Francis’ address to teachers attending the International Congress on Catechesis in Rome September 27, 2013, he emphasized that teaching the faith is the best legacy we can pass on. To help children, young people and adults to know and love the Lord more and more is one of the most exciting aspects of education. It builds up the Church.

He makes a great distinction between “being” a catechist and “working” as a catechist. He challenges us to look at why we are a catechist. To say “I work as a catechist because I like to teach”, will not do. Unless you “are” a catechist you will not be successful...you will not bear fruit.

Catechesis is a vocation it embraces our whole life. It means leading people to encounter Christ by our words and our lives, by giving witness. Pope Benedict XVI has said: “The Church does not grow by proselytizing; she grows by attracting others.” What attracts is our witness. Being a catechist means witnessing to the faith, being consistent in our personal life. People should see the Gospel, read the Gospel in our lives. To “be” a catechist requires love, an ever stronger love for Christ, a love for his holy people. This love cannot be bought in stores. This love comes from Christ! It is Christ’s gift and if it comes from Christ, it also starts with Christ, and we too need to start anew with Christ from the love he gives us. What does this starting anew from Christ mean for a teacher? Here Pope Francis gives three points to be pondered.

To start anew from Christ means *being close to him*. Jesus stresses the importance of this with the disciples at the Last Supper, as he prepared to give us his own greatest gift of love, his sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus uses the image of the vine and the branches and says: Abide in my love, remain

⁴ *Lumen Fidei*, *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*, #48.

attached to me, as the branch is attached to the vine. If we are joined to him, then we are able to bear fruit. This is what it means to be close to Christ. Abide in Jesus! Being a catechist is not a title, it is an attitude: abiding with him lasts a lifetime! It means abiding in the Lord's presence and letting ourselves be led by him.

How do you abide in the presence of the Lord? When you visit the Lord, when you look at the tabernacle, what do you do? Let yourself be gazed upon by the Lord. He looks at us and this is the way of praying. Do you let yourselves be gazed upon by the Lord? But how do you do this? You look at the tabernacle and you let yourselves be looked at...it is simple! This is part of "being" a catechist. This warms the heart, igniting the fire of friendship with the Lord, making you feel that he truly sees you, that he is close to you and loves you.

In the Church, there are a variety of vocations and a variety of spiritualities. What is important is to find the way best suited for you to be with the Lord, and this everyone can do; it is possible for every state of life. Do I find time to remain in his presence, in silence, to be looked upon by him? Do I let his fire warm my heart? If the warmth of God, of his love, of his tenderness is not in our own heart, then how can we warm the heart of others?

His second point or element is this: *starting anew with Christ* means *imitating him by leaving ourselves behind and going out to encounter others*. When we put Christ as the center of our life, we ourselves don't become the center. The more that you unite yourself to Christ and he becomes the center of your life, the more he leads you out of yourself, leads you from making yourself the center and opens you to others. This is the true dynamism of love, this is the movement of God himself. God is the center, but he is always self-gift, relationship, love that gives itself away...and this is what we will become if we remain united to Christ. He will draw us into this dynamism of love. Where there is true life in Christ, there follows an openness to others. For Pope Francis this is the job of the catechist: to constantly go forth to others out of love, to bear witness to Jesus and to talk about Jesus, to proclaim Jesus.

The heart of the catechist always beats with this systolic and diastolic movement: union with Christ – encounter with the other. If one of these movements is missing, the heart no longer beats, it can no longer live. The heart of the catechist receives the gift of the kerygma, and in turn offers it to others as a gift. The catechist is conscious of having received a gift, the gift of faith, and he or she then gives that gift in turn to others. It is love that attracts us and sends us; it draws us in and gives us to others. This tension marks the beating of the heart of the Christian, especially the heart of the catechist. Are we being fed by our relationship with the Lord, so that we can bring him to others, and not to keep it for ourselves?

The third element is: *starting anew with Christ* means *not being afraid to go with him to the outskirts*. Pope Francis finds Jonah, a really interesting figure, especially for these times of great change and uncertainty. Jonah is a devout man, with a tranquil and ordered life, which causes him to have a clear-cut way of seeing things and to judge everything and everyone accordingly. He has it all figured out. He is rigid. When the Lord called him and told him to go and preach to Nineveh, the great pagan city, Jonah doesn't like it. "Go there? But I have the whole truth here!" He doesn't like it. Nineveh is outside his comfort zone; it is on the outskirts of his world. So he escapes, he sets

off for Spain; he runs away and boards a ship that will take him there. Go and re-read the Book of Jonah! It is short, but it is a very instructive parable for those working in the Church.

What does all this teach us? It teaches us not to be afraid to pass beyond our comfort zone and to follow God, because God is always pushing, pressing forward. God is not afraid! He is bigger than our little way of seeing things. God is not afraid of the outskirts. If you go to the outskirts, you will find him there. God is always faithful and creative. But really, is there such a thing as a catechist, a teacher who is not creative? Creativity is what sustains us as catechists. God is creative, he is not closed, and so he is never inflexible. He welcomes us; he meets us; he understands us. To be faithful, to be creative; we need to be able to change. Why must I change? So that I can adapt to the situations in which I must proclaim the Gospel. To stay close to God, we need to know how to set out, we must not be afraid to set out. If a catechist has an easy time of it, he or she will end up being a statue in a museum.

Whenever we Christians are enclosed in our groups, our movements, our parishes, our schools, in our little worlds, we remain closed. When a room is closed it begins to get dank. If a person is closed up in a room, he or she becomes ill. If a Christian goes to the streets or to the outskirts, he or she may risk the same thing that can happen to anyone out there: an accident. Pope Francis reminds us that he prefers a bruised Church than an ill Church.

However, Jesus does not say: go off and do things on your own. That is not what he is saying. Jesus says: Go, for I am with you! If we go out to bring his Gospel with love, with a true apostolic spirit, he walks with us, he goes ahead of us, he gets there first. Jesus is waiting for us in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded bodies, in their disabilities, in their hardships, in their lack of faith, their difficult behaviors, in their poverty, in their emotional trauma. Jesus is always there, waiting for you to help that child, that youth, that young adult.

Let us remain with Christ – abiding in Christ – and let us always try to be one with him. Let us follow him, let us imitate him in his movement of love, in his going forth to meet humanity. Let us go forth and open doors. Let us have the audacity to mark out new paths for proclaiming the Gospel.

As leaders in the Church of today, you as principals and teachers, must take on the leadership position that is yours and develop personally, theologically and assume the role of evangelization in your schools and parishes. Catechetical certification is one of the means used to steer professionals to become dynamic Catholics in the Church of today. Some of the principles underlying certification include:

- *Keep a focus on Jesus*: on one's personal relationship with the person of Jesus; on one's growing understanding of him and his message of good news. "Everything planned in the Church must have Christ and his Gospel as its starting-point".⁶
- *Deepen one's Catholic faith and identity, and cultivate an "ecclesial consciousness"* so that one learns to be "ever mindful of what it means to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ and

⁶ John Paul II, *The Church in America* [1999], #67.

participate in her mystery of communion and in her dynamism in mission and the apostolate”⁷. This involves having a sense of the Church that is both as positive and realistic, as devout and savvy, as that of John Paul II and of Dorothy Day.

- *Promote a spirit of ecclesial breadth and balance.* There is an attempt made throughout to recognize and respect the range and fact of the actual living diversity in Catholic styles of prayer, thought and practice. We desire to create in the Church itself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony and acknowledge all legitimate diversity for the sake of our fidelity to our mission of evangelization.⁸
- *Support and lead to active discipleship in the Church and/or society.* All are called to grow in the practice of the faith, doing the mission of the Church in their own particular setting. “It is not a question of simply *knowing* what God wants from each in the various situations of life. The individual must *do* what God wants...”⁹ This “doing” has a particular thrust toward witnessing and sharing the good news of Jesus (i.e., evangelization) and toward the transformation of society and working for the common good (i.e., justice).
- *Use an adult learning model*, which can be called a *catechumenal model* of formation. Certification depends on a good balance of different types of formation:
 - personal formation* in which one comes to understand themselves better as persons, becoming attentive to the value of a healthy lifestyle and be invited to growth as persons of faith; understanding the call to discipleship; communication and listening skills.
 - spiritual formation* in which one learns the way of prayer and deepens one’s practice of prayer;
 - theological formation* in which one will acquire a more informed faith, learning about the life and message of Jesus, the Scriptures, the Church’s teaching and tradition, how to think with an ecclesial consciousness and a deeper understanding of the truths of the faith, liturgical practice.
 - pastoral or evangelizing formation* in which one learns the methods of evangelization within the classroom, school and parish along with leadership skills, involvement in small faith sharing communities (i.e. with fellow teachers, the principal, the pastor, others in the mission of teaching, instruction and leadership), strengthening one’s Catholic identity and mission.

⁷ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, (Apostolic exhortation on the laity), 1988, #64

⁸ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), 1965, #92.

⁹ *Christifideles Laici*, #58.

Certification for Teachers/Principals in Catholic Schools

The goal of Catholic Education is to make one's "faith become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction." To have a living faith we must truly integrate it into our entire being. To have a conscious faith we must process, discern and understand. To have a truly active faith we must enter into relationships and into service. A variety of people are involved in, and a number of influences affect, our striving towards this goal.

The distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the Catholic school depends on the efforts and example of the whole faculty. The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior. All members of the faculty, at least by example, are an integral part of the process of religious education... Teachers' life style and character are as important as their professional credentials. Their daily witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living has a profound effect on the education and formation of their students.

Teachers of religion, under-gird a Catholic school's effectiveness as a community of faith and a center for evangelization. Who they are, what they say, and what they do should be integrated harmoniously if they are to be genuine educators in the faith. "The role of religion teachers is of first importance." Religion teachers in Catholic schools not only teach the Catholic faith as an academic subject but also bear witness to the truth of what they teach.

The religion teacher is the key, the vital component, if the educational goals of the school are to be achieved. But the effectiveness of religious instruction is closely tied to the personal witness given by the teacher; this witness is what brings the content of the lessons to life. Teachers of religion, therefore, must be men and women endowed with many gifts, both natural and supernatural, who are also capable of giving witness to these gifts.¹⁰

Catechetical instruction in the Catholic school should be based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and objectives of the school. It should have its proper place in the order of each day alongside other lessons. It should be coordinated with the catechetical plan of the parish to which it is connected. The Catholic school can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis. Since its educational goals are rooted in Christian principles, the school as a whole is inserted into the evangelical function of the Church. It assists in and promotes faith education in the parish as a whole and is inserted into the evangelical function of the Church.

¹⁰ *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, #96.

The Catholic school affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with its daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the Gospel message; for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church; for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence, and love of the Liturgy; for building community; for prayer; for proper formation of conscience; for the development of virtue; and for participating in Christian service. In addition, Catholic schools strive to relate all of the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life – science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth.¹¹

The school itself is called to be a faith community and precisely as such teaches Christian habits of mind, heart and work. It hands on Catholic faith and values to the young both by word and by example. Thus, the whole Church has a family interest in Catholic schools, since all the baptized are responsible for seeing that the specific mission and distinctive characteristics of Catholic schools are maintained and improved.

The aim of religious instruction is not simply one of intellectual assent to religious truths but also a total commitment of one's whole being to the Person of Christ. This commitment to Christ is intrinsically linked to the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, which the school encourages as its students discover and express their Christian identity and mission.

The entire school program is meant to be Christ-centered. The Catholic school “strives to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the life of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life, and of humankind”, as the Declaration on Christian Education states.

At the core of the mission of Catholic schools is catechesis - nurturing faith within the Christian community through instruction, personal witness, prayer and example. In the Diocese of Grand Rapids catechist certification is required for all teachers in Catholic schools. All teachers must meet this requirement in a timely manner. Each teacher is responsible for his/her own progress toward certification. It is imperative that teachers understand the requirements and work to complete their certification as well as their on-going formation and renewal.

¹¹ *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) USCCB, 2005, #54 9d.

Catechetical Certification for Teachers and Principals

Within the Diocese of Grand Rapids, there are three required dimensions of growth in which teachers and principals must show continual competence in order to maintain certification: Spirituality, Theology, and Evangelization.

Area A – Human/Spiritual – one’s own personal, spiritual and faith development

Teaching ministry builds upon the mission to which all the baptized are called to, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel” (Mark 15:15). This proclamation of the Good News requires a witness not only in words but also in actions. It is through the authentic witness of the Catholic Christian in their manner of life and fidelity to the Church’s teachings and traditions that the Gospel is best preached. All those called to the teaching ministry must show themselves to be well-formed and healthy human beings who are living good and moral lives according to the Church’s teaching. Teachers not living a life in keeping with the Church’s clear teaching in these matters is to create contradiction in our work and to sow scandal within the community.

Teachers and principals ought to demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with children, youth and adult. This development entails the two-fold dynamic of strengthening positive traits that foster teaching effectiveness and lessening negative traits that hinder it. Accordingly, they ought to strive to deepen their knowledge of self and others, grow from experiences of suffering and challenge, maintain balanced and positive relationships, appreciate and value diversity and demonstrate basic human virtues. Cultivating such traits and skills within a Christ-centered community contributes to the development of a healthy and well-balanced personality, for the sake of both personal and spiritual growth.

“Spiritual formation aims to arouse and animate true hunger for holiness, desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, daily growing love of God and neighbor in life and ministry, and the practices of prayer and spirituality that foster these attitudes and dispositions. It promotes and strengthens that fundamental conversion that places God and not oneself, at the center of one’s life. Openness to ongoing conversion is a prerequisite for fruitful spiritual formation.”¹²

AREA B –PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGY – The study of Church teachings, scripture and Church documents

Having encountered the person and message of Jesus Christ, the hunger of the teacher/principal for union with the Triune God is constant. The result of this hunger is the call to holiness, built on the Word of God, experienced in the liturgy and sacraments, formed through suffering, nurtured in joy, and sustained in community with all the baptized through the Church as Mystical Body. The teacher/principal gives witness to a well-formed spirituality through a rich and diversified prayer, theological reflection, and action rooted in Catholic Social Teaching.

¹² USCCB, Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, 2005, p. 38.

Formation for teachers and principals is a journey beyond catechesis into theological study. A teacher's faith and teaching is formed by the study of the Catholic theological tradition. A theological competent minister can articulate and interpret this Catholic theological tradition with disciples from diverse communities. Teachers and principals should have a sound knowledge of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*.¹³

Theological study of the faith employs principles and methods proper to the various branches of theological scholarship and research. It goes beyond the basics to explore current developments and the issues they raise. It unearths treasures in the Tradition and sheds light on the Church's teaching by making connections within and beyond the discipline of theology. Teachers and principals engage in theological study for the sake of a broadened and deepened faith and a better-grounded and informed teaching ministry.¹⁴

AREA C – EVANGELIZATION/METHODS – leading the spiritual and faith development of others

A teacher/principal demonstrates a range of leadership skills needed for functioning effectively in a school setting. In their role as evangelizers, teachers operate in a parochial setting which has various dimensions – faith formation, worship, cultural diversity, community life, social justice and apostolic service. Teachers are effective listeners who foster respect and offer compassionate care within varied settings. In the spirit of the Gospel, they serve others as companions on the journey of faith. Teachers demonstrate good stewardship, work collaboratively with others in the parish and exhibit human resource and management skills. They have the ability to discern and nurture the gifts of all the baptized in order to build the Kingdom of God. Teachers embrace a professional code of ethics worthy of Catholic teachers/principals and abide by civil and Church law.

Evangelization means bringing the Good News to others. It has both an inward and an outward direction. Inwardly it calls for continued receiving of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and allowing it to touch and enter the students we teach by on-going conversion. Outwardly it calls for us to live what we have learned and teach our students to live the Gospel and move out to others. How do we form our students into disciples?

Diocesan Catechetical Certification for Teachers

- ☐ Total of 50 clock hours of effective formation
- ☐ Must be qualified to teach within the schools of the Diocese of Grand Rapids
- ☐ These 50 hours include foundational topics of Catholic Christian teachings with a minimum of 16 clock hours in SPIRITUALITY; 16 clock hours in PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGY; and 16 clock hours EVANGELIZATION. The remaining 2 hours may be in any dimension. A Diocesan certification is good for four years.

¹³ USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Washington DC, 2005.

¹⁴ USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard*, 2005, p.43.

- ☐ Foundational topics to be included in formation: Scripture, Creed, Jesus, Sacraments, Liturgy and Prayer, Morality, The Church, Faith Development.

Advanced Catechetical Certification for Teachers

- ☐ A total of 80 clock hours of effective formation.
- ☐ There must be 30 clock hours beyond the Diocesan Catechetical Certification.
- ☐ These clock hours include a minimum of 26 clock hours in SPIRITUALITY, 26 in PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGY of the Catholic faith and 26 hours in EVANGELIZATION and 2 additional hours in any dimension. The Advanced certification is good for five years.

Master Catechist Certification

- ☐ Advanced Catechist Certification (80 clock hours)
- ☐ Plus at least 18 Academic Credit hours (minimum of 12 credit hours in theology, with the other 6 credit hours in theology or other disciplines related to catechetical ministry. The Master Catechist certification is good for six years.

Renewal of Certification for Teachers

Renewal of Diocesan Teacher Certification

- ☐ Total of 25 clock hours of effective formation
- ☐ These 25 hours include a minimum of 8 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation, plus 1 additional clock hour in any of the three dimensions of formation.
- ☐ Must be completed within 4 years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for four additional years.

Renewal of Advanced Catechetical Certification

- ☐ Total of 30 clock hours of effective formation
- ☐ These 30 hours include a minimum of 10 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation.
- ☐ Must be completed within 5 years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for five additional years.

Renewal of Master Catechist Certification

- ☐ Total of 35 clock hours of effective formation
- ☐ These 35 hours include a minimum of 11 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation and 2 hours in any dimension

- ❑ Must be completed within 6 years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for six additional years.

Note:

- ❑ **Teachers may log only Professional Theology** hours. Just to attend a talk on some aspect of religion does not necessarily count toward Professional Theology. Professional Theology is much more rigorous and in depth and is usually taught by someone with a degree in theology.
- ❑ Renewal hours will not advance to the next level. Additional hours earned beyond the renewal numbers will be counted for next level. For example: the renewal of a diocesan certification requires 25 hours. If during this time the teacher has earned an additional 30 hours they will move into the Advanced Certification
- ❑ **If certification lapses without renewal** or without an indication of reason for lack of renewal, the person is no longer certified as a catechist and to be re-certified must have an additional formation hour for every three months, after the first three months, the certification has lapsed along with the number required for the standard renewal, for example: if a person was certified in 2010 and needed a renewal by 2013, but failed to renew on time an additional hour will be added for every three months, after the first three months, beyond the amount needed for the renewal.
- ❑ The only college credits accepted are those in theology or a related ministry.
- ❑ Use the excel sheet on the diocesan website to keep all hours. Continue to add to that sheet for renewal and movement to a higher level of certification.

Descriptions and Examples of the Three Dimensions for Certification

AREA A – SPIRITUALITY/HUMAN – one’s own spiritual/psychological/faith development

- Participation in retreats for spiritual development
- Participation in Parish Missions
- Learning and experiencing various prayer styles
- Talks on Spirituality, Vocation, Living out our Christian lives
- Opportunities for reflection on one’s faith life and personal spirituality
- Personal Catholic bible study and reflection
- Spiritual Direction
- Pro-life ministry

- Stages of human and faith development
- Development of conscience
- Personal Bible study and reflection

AREA B –PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGY – the study of Church teachings and documents and Scripture

- Exploring various church documents
- Study of Scripture – various books of the Bible, Hebrew Scriptures, Christian Scriptures
- Morality
- Liturgy
- Church Doctrine
- The Creed: Trinitarian and Christocentric
- Prayers of the Church
- Sacraments – Initiation, Healing and Service
- Ecclesiology
- Jesus Christ
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Mary and the Saints
- Paschal Mystery
- Liturgical Year
- Familiarity with ecumenical and interreligious practice
- Familiarity with the theological issues that emerge

AREA C – EVANGELIZATION/METHODS – leading the spiritual and faith development of others

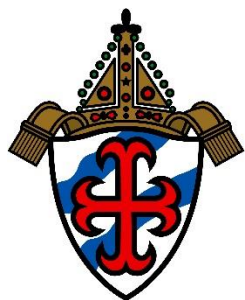
- Faith development of children
- Process of adult, young adult, adolescent and child learning
- Physical, psychological, moral and spiritual development
- The catechesis of special needs children/youth
- Impact on the family of societal, cultural and environmental issues
- Understanding the New Evangelization and how to practice it
- Understanding the evangelization process of students
- Culture and family life from various perspectives
- The development of conscience
- Shaping a social environment in which faith can be nurtured
- Creating a good and safe physical environment
- Creative activities in learning
- Teaching students to pray together
- Developing successful lesson plans
- Teaching in an un-Christian culture

- Understanding the reality of persecution of those practicing the Christian faith
- Listening & communication skills
- Conflict Management
- Time Management
- Group process and dynamics

Examples of experiences that may **NOT** be accepted for catechetical certification include but are not limited to:

- Volunteer experiences, i.e., Eucharistic Minister, TECH retreat counselor; social justice volunteers, Youth rallies (unless there is a definite workshop given with an identifiable topic and speaker for the adults).
- Taking part in sacramental retreats with students
- Reading of magazines or books when there is no indication of how the material was discussed or how it impacted the way a person taught.
- Workshops participated in at MANNS or other conferences do not necessarily provide formation hours for catechetical certification.

For initial and on-going certification, the teacher completes the necessary hours of coursework, and the catechist certification application form, submitting it to the Parish Catechetical Leader or School Principal for signature. The signed form is then forwarded to the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation. Letters of Certification will be sent to local Catechetical Leaders/Principals for distribution to their catechists/teachers. The catechists are thus affirmed for their continued growth and competency as they further the mission for the Church in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.



Teacher Catechetical Certification Information Guide

Levels of Certification

Diocesan Catechetical Certification

- ☐ Total of **50 clock hours**
- ☐ These 50 hours include at least 16 clock hours in each dimension with the other 2 in any dimension.
- ☐ **Diocesan Certification is good for four years.**

Advanced Catechetical Certification

- ☐ Total of **80 clock hours** of effective formation.
- ☐ These 80 hours include a minimum of 26 hours in each of the three dimensions of formation plus 2 hours in any of the three dimensions of formation.
- ☐ An Advanced Catechist Certification requires 30 hours beyond the Diocesan Catechist Certification
- ☐ **Advanced Certification is good for five years.**

Master Catechist Certification

- ☐ Must have an Advanced Catechetical Certification of 80 clock hours
- ☐ Plus at least 18 Academic Credit hours (minimum of 12 credit hours in theology, with the other 6 credit hours in theology or other disciplines related to catechetical ministry).
- ☐ **Master Catechist Certification is good for 6 years.**

A **Master Catechist Certification** requires the 80 hours of formation plus at least 18 Academic Credit hours (minimum of 12 credit hours in theology, with the other 6 credit hours in theology or other disciplines related to catechetical ministry).

Endorsements on Advanced Certification

- **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** When a person has completed Level 1, Part 1 and 2 training for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, they will receive a special endorsement on the Advanced Certification for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and a statement of the level achieved.
- **Youth Ministry** When a person has completed the two-year Youth Ministry training series and has completed their final project they will receive an endorsement of Youth Ministry on their Advanced Certification.

- **Disability Endorsement** When a person has completed 18 hours of formation in disability ministry they will receive an endorsement of Disability Studies on their Advanced Certification.
- **Leadership Formation** When a person has completed the Leadership program at Notre Dame they will receive an endorsement for such on their Advanced Certification.

NOTE: For the recognition of the endorsement a copy of the certificate or transcripts must accompany the application for certification.

Renewal of Diocesan Catechist Certification

- ☐ Total of 25 clock hours of effective formation.
- ☐ These 25 hours include a minimum of 8 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation plus 1 additional clock hour in any of the three dimensions.
- ☐ Renewal of this certification must be completed within 4 years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for four additional years.

Renewal of Advanced Catechist Certification

- ☐ Total of 30 clock hours of effective formation
- ☐ These 30 hours include a minimum of 10 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation.
- ☐ Must be completed within five years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for five additional years.

Renewal of Master Catechist Certification

- ☐ Total of 35 clock hours of effective formation.
- ☐ These 35 hours include a minimum of 11 clock hours in each of the three dimensions of formation plus an additional 2 in any dimension
- ☐ Additional credits are not required for renewal.
- ☐ Must be completed within 6 years of achieving this level of certification. Renewal extends certification status for six additional years.

NOTE:

- ☐ Hours earned toward renewal of certification do not count in advancement toward the next level of certification.
- ☐ If certification lapses without renewal, the person is no longer certified as a catechist. In order to be reinstated the number of hours required for renewal plus an hour for every quarter year in which the certification was lapsed. There is no penalty for the first three lapsed months

Diocesan Certification

Initial – 50 hours

Renewal in four years – 25 hours (8 in each dimension + 1 in any dimension)

In order to move to Advanced Certification – 30 additional hours

Advanced Certification

Initial – 80 hours

Renewal in 5 years – 30 hours (10 in each dimension)

Master Certification

Initial – 80 hours from Advanced Certification

Initial – 18 credit hours in theology (may have 12 in theology and 6 in other ministry areas)

Renewal in 6 years – 35 hours (10 in each dimension + 5 in any dimension)

What is Professional Theology?

“Professional Theology” is the type of hours in theology that those persons in leadership positions, i.e. School Teachers and Principals are required to have to fulfill the requirement of “Theology” in the certification process. Professional Theology requires that the presenter has a degree in theology

“Professional Theology” provides a more in depth understanding of the Catholic faith and prepares and confirms persons as leaders in the knowledge and exercise of their faith in their capacity to lead others in the faith. The aim is to give leaders the ability to see the significance of events and experiences from the perspective of the faith; to see how faith is connected to everyday life, to science, culture and the arts and to make morally right decisions in their lives and lead others to do the same.

To have faith is to be in a personal relationship with God who is Truth itself. It is the fundamental experience of God, the process of understanding who Jesus Christ is in one’s life.

Attending talks or presentations on some aspect of religion does not fulfill “Professional Theology”. Professional Theology requires that a person dig deeper into their faith, and gives a comprehensive understanding of the faith. Any of the classes taken from Catholic Distance University and VLCFF (University of Dayton), University of Notre Dame STEP program and Aquinas will meet these requirements. The “Parish Ministry and Catechetical Conference” that takes place in September at West Catholic High School will have institutes and workshops that fulfill this requirement. Anything that the diocese provides through the Office of Faith Formation will be identified as “Theology” or “Professional Theology”.

Teachers/Principals may take all events marked “Theology”. For leadership persons those events marked as “Professional Theology” are the only ones that can be used for certification. You may certainly attend them, but they cannot be used toward certification.

<u>Areas of Formation</u>	<u>Diocesan</u>	<u>Advanced</u>	<u>Master Catechist</u>
Spiritual/Human	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>	80 hours + 18 or more credits in Theology
Theology/Scripture	16	26	
Evangelization/Methods	16	26	
Total Hours Required	50	80	
	Teachers & Principals		
Renewal every___years	4	5	6
Hours needed for renewal	24	30	35