



Religious Certification in the Diocese of La Crosse



Why is Ongoing Personal Faith Formation Necessary?

What is Religious Certification?

Growing in the Catholic Faith through study and prayer is a life-long process. It is essential, above all, for any adult who teaches the Catholic Faith to receive ongoing formation in order to properly hand on the Faith to the next generation. Ongoing faith formation is necessary as “the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 234). Therefore, the pastor, Catholic School administrator, DRE, CRE, and Youth Minister are to attend to this most important task by advertising and organizing faith formation opportunities.

In 2008 the Religious Certification Program for the Diocese was standardized. Therefore, in all parts of the Diocese, all those who teach the Faith are to receive the same content based upon Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Magisterial Documents.

What are the levels of Religious Certification?

There are two levels of Religious Certification in the Diocese of La Crosse. Basic Certification consists of receiving 40 hours of faith formation in Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology. Advanced Certification consists of receiving 90 hours of faith formation in Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology.

In order to obtain Basic Certification or Advanced Certification, all DREs, CREs, and Youth Ministers are to obtain 12 hours of

certification credit per year. Catechists are to receive 6 hours of certification credit per year. Note: The time that is spent preparing to teach second grade or sixth grade, for example, while it is necessary and helpful for personal growth, is not considered part of Certification hours. The faith formation for certification is to be formation at an adult level.

How do I obtain Religious Certification?

There are different ways to receive credit hours for Religious Certification, which are spelled out below. Certification should be obtained over a five-year period from Diocesan Conferences, parish offerings, and/or individual, home study using resources approved by the Diocese. All certification hours can be obtained from the parish or home-study.

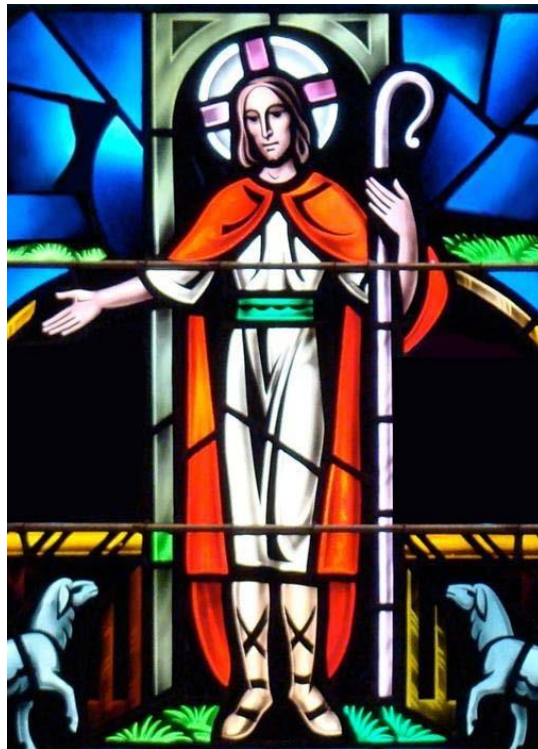
There are three sessions a year offered by the Offices of Catholic Schools and Catechesis and Evangelization. These sessions are from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and are located in La Crosse, Stevens Point or Eau Claire. Feedback has been excellent regarding these

sessions. The content of these sessions and time of year include:

- Methodology - August
- Sacred Scripture and Prayer – February
- Sacraments and Prayer – May

Listings of exact dates, site, and times are provided in LaCrosseRoads.

A priest from the Diocese or an approved speaker with a degree in Catechetics, Theology, Christian Ministry or related field may present



teachings for certification credit. It is requested that the names of all speakers be submitted to the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization.

Any speaker from outside the Diocese, who is to also have the proper degree, is to receive permission to speak in the Diocese through the Chancery. A speaker request form can be found on the Diocesan website and must be submitted before inviting the speaker. If a speaker is invited a second time, the speaker form is to be re-submitted.

Another way to receive certification credit is to use approved resources such as the “Biblical Walk through the Mass” or “Oremus (Let us Pray)” which are available for free rental. The approved list of resources can be downloaded from the Diocesan website. Go to the main page, click on Office and Ministries (top, right-hand corner), click on Catechesis and then Certification Resources. These resources can be purchased for the parish or checked out for free rental from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. **Note:** Participation in discussion using the workbook or prepared questions is always to be part of receiving credit. If there is not an opportunity for discussion, each participant is to write a paragraph in response to the following questions: What is the most important point that you learned? How will you apply this to your life? How will you apply this to your specific teaching apostolate?

Certification credit may also be earned through courses on Scripture, Doctrine or Methodology from a Catholic College or University that are taught by a Catholic professor (12 hours of credit per 3 hour course and 6 hours of credit for a two hour course). Further, credit may be earned by attending seminars or conferences in which the teaching focuses on one of the certification listings for Scripture, Doctrine (Theology) and Methodology.

Discussion questions or a written response to the three questions are again a requirement.

How are the Certification Hours recorded?

Every person who teaches the Faith in a Catholic School and/or Parish Program is to have a certification folder. Credit hours are to be recorded in the following areas: Diocesan Conferences, Catholic school or parish inservices or individual study. Answers to discussion questions are to be kept in the folder along with certificates of completion for seminars etc.

What am to do when I complete both Basic and Advanced Certification?

After completion of Basic and /or Advanced Certification, renewal of certification is necessary. It is recommended that renewal hours include Doctrine, Scripture, and Methodology. Formation in the Faith is a life-long process in order to grow in our love and commitment to Jesus Christ. Therefore, six hours of certification credit for a catechist (for a total of 30 hours) and twelve hours for a Catechetical Leader are necessary each year for renewal. Therefore, a renewal for a catechist is 30 hours over five-years and for a Catechetical Leader is 60 hours over five years.

Why is Religious Certification so Important?

Formation for Administrators, Catholic School teachers, Catechetical Leaders and catechists follows upon a longstanding requirement in the Diocese that those who are to be teachers and witnesses of the Catholic Faith are to be receiving ongoing personal faith formation. According to the *General Directory for Catechesis* from Rome, “...Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the *formation of lay catechists*” (n. 234). Therefore, it is necessary to plan for and participate in formation that assists a teacher/catechist “to mature as a person, a believer and as an apostle” (, n. 234, 238).

