

Diocese of La Crosse Religious Certification Program

The Certification Program consists of receiving Basic Certification, followed by Advanced and then keeping certification updated with Advanced Renewal.

What is the plan for Basic Certification?

In August 2016, the Basic Certification program for professional staff (administrators, teachers, counselors) was revised. The New Teacher Formation Program consists of:

- three face-to-face sessions provided by live presenters at designated locations.
Note: All professional staff to the Diocese must attend the first face-to-face session offered in August, even if they have completed certification from another Diocese and/or earned any type of degree in Theology or Religious Studies, etc.
- the 10 sessions of the Symbolon Program, Part One. Symbolon Part One is to be completed with a group of teachers on a regular schedule. If there is only one new teacher, they are encouraged to join with teachers at a nearby school or wait till the second year to join with another new teacher.

These two components are to be attained within two years of being hired. When Symbolon Part One is completed, the Diocesan Certification Completion Form needs to be filled out in its entirety and emailed to the Office for Catholic Schools. When the 3 face-to-face sessions and Symbolon Part One have been completed, the Catholic Schools Office is to be notified to issue a Basic certificate.

During this two-year period, the new teacher will also be receiving six hours of certification credit from the local school and six hours from the Day of Personal Faith Formation provided in the spring to all teachers by the Offices for Catechesis and Evangelization and Catholic Schools. These hours are to be applied toward Advanced Certification.

What is the plan for Initial Advanced Certification?

To earn initial Advanced Certification will require 90 hours earned over a five-year cycle, after completing Basic. (82 hours are required for certified teachers as eight hours of methodology are waived.) The hours are earned in four categories for a total of 90 hours: Scripture, Doctrine (Theology), Catholic Spirituality, and Methods.

Note: Every Catholic School administrator, teacher and counselor - all professional staff - are required to receive Basic and Advanced Certification.

How will I earn hours?

Opportunities will be provided at the diocesan, system/school, and individual level. Note: The individual hours are best completed with a group.

- The **Diocese of La Crosse** will provide 6 hours of personal faith formation each spring. During the five-year cycle, these opportunities will include hours either toward Scripture, Doctrine, Catholic Spirituality or Methods.
- **FranciscanAtHome** online learning system is FREE and is the *preferred* means of earning certification hours: franciscanathome.com/diocese-la-crosse. Responses are to be recorded on FranciscanAtHome or completed on paper & placed in Cert. Folder
- Every year, **Catholic Schools** will provide 6 hours of ongoing faith formation at teacher trainings presented by qualified speakers or with approved materials from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization.
- To complete Advanced, each administrator and teacher will be responsible for 6 hours annually of individual study, (as part of a group is the ideal). Approved materials from



the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization must be used. The Certification resources are available from the curriculum library; check the list at the Diocesan website: www.dioc.org/catechesis/certification. Up to 15 hours of credit are available for attending 10 sessions of Symbolon. The category for Symbolon is Doctrine (Theology). Note: Teachers seeking Advanced or Advanced Renewal Certification are to fill out the Symbolon form in its entirety and place it in their certification folder.

What is the plan for Advanced Renewals?

Once Advanced Certification is earned, Advanced Renewal continues as long as a teacher is working at a Catholic School. Advanced Renewals require 60 hours over a five-year period from annual spring diocesan and school training opportunities. Individual/group study is not required for renewals, but is still highly encouraged. Certificates are issued on a 5-yr. cycle.

Why does each teacher and administrator need a certification folder?

Professional staff are to record and keep evidence of hours earned with supporting paperwork for the current five-year period and kept on file by each building administrator. It is the teacher's responsibility to update certification hours and provide documentation to the Diocesan Office for Catechesis and Evangelization when sufficient hours have been accumulated for an Advanced or Advanced Renewal certificate. Folders are to be submitted in good order: categorize according to Diocesan inservices, school inservices and individual hours, with the preferred way of studying for individual hours to be with a small group.

How do I record information on the yellow certification folders?

When a teacher completes hours for certification – for Advanced and Advanced Renewal only – the teacher should ask his/her building administrator for the folder, update it, get the principal's verification (initials) and return it to the place it is kept in the school office.

Front Cover: Enter your name and teaching experience

Certification requirements -

All 3 areas for Basic Certification will be completed at the same time and the date will be the date of the Basic Certificate.

For Advanced Certification, the Advanced Certificate will not be issued until a total of 90 hours (or 82 in the case of a certified teacher) in the three categories of Scripture, Doctrine (Theology) and Methods are completed. The dated area will be completed by the Office for Catechesis & Evangelization.

Other Panels: There are separate panels for recording diocesan inservices, school inservices, and individual studies. Each entry should be initialed by your administrator as verification.

What goes in the folder?

Clock hour certificates received for participation/completion of a program should be placed in the folder. Group study reflections/answers to discussion questions or completed booklets (not agendas etc.) are also to be kept in the folder to document completion.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Contact your administrator with questions regarding the process. Contact Ann Lankford at the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization alankford@dioc.org if you have questions regarding Advanced Certification. Contact Beth Johnson bjohnson@dioc.org if you would like to check out or purchase resources. Resources may be checked out under a time limit of one week per number of sessions on the DVDs or videos.

