

Diocese of La Crosse Religious Certification Program

The Certification Program consists of receiving Basic Certification, followed by Initial Advanced Certification and then keeping certification updated with Advanced Renewal. This is required for every Catholic School administrator, teacher, and counselor - all professional staff.

How is Basic Certification earned through New Teacher Formation?

The below components are to be attained within two years of being hired as professional staff.

- Three face-to-face sessions (Teaching as Ministry, Scripture, and Prayer and Sacraments) provided by live presenters at designated locations. **Note:** Even if new teachers have completed certification from another Diocese and/or earned any type of degree in Theology or Religious Studies, etc., all professional staff new to the Diocese **must** attend Teaching as Ministry.
- The 10 sessions of Symbolon Part One are 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.
 - After completing Symbolon Part One, the Diocesan Certification Completion Form is to be filled out in its entirety (including dates, initials, and signatures) and emailed to the Office for Catholic Schools. When completing Symbolon Part One and the 3 face-to-face sessions, the 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 from the fall and spring Faith Inservices provided for all teachers by the Offices for Catechesis & Evangelization and Catholic Schools. These hours will apply toward Advanced Certification.

What is the plan for initial Advanced Certification?

To complete Advanced Certification 90 hours are to be earned over a five-year cycle. (82 hours are required for certified teachers as eight hours of methodology are waived.) The hours are earned in four categories: Scripture, Doctrine (Theology), Catholic Spirituality, and Methods.

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 12 hrs. per year, 60 hours over a five-year period from annual fall and spring diocesan inservices. Individual/group study is not required for renewals, but is still highly encouraged. Certificates are issued in 5-yr. cycles.

How will I earn hours for Advanced or Advanced Renewal?

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

- The **Diocese of La Crosse** will provide 12 hours of personal faith formation at the fall and spring Diocesan inservices. During the five-year cycle, these opportunities will include hours either toward Scripture, Doctrine, Catholic Spirituality, or Methods.
- **Franciscan At Home** online learning system is FREE and is the *preferred* means of earning certification hours. Workshops are worth 4 hours of certification credit. Each learner's responses are to be recorded on *Franciscan At Home*. Print the page that shows workshop completion & place in Folder. 2 workshops are required for Advanced and Advanced Renewal: 1) *The Mission of the Catholic School & the Role of the Teacher* and 2) *The Human Person in God's Loving Plan*.



- For teachers working toward initial Advanced Certification, **the local Catholic School or Catholic School System** will provide 6 hours of Faith Formation every year through *Franciscan at Home*, or presented by qualified speakers, or with approved materials from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization.
 - To complete Advanced, each administrator and teacher will need to earn 12 hours from the Diocese annually and 6 hours from the school annually. Being part of a group is the ideal.
 - Approved resources from the Office for Catechesis must be used. Check the list at the Diocesan website: diolc.org/schools “Religious Certification Program.”
 - Up to 15 hours of credit are available for attending 10 sessions of Part II of Symbolon. The category for Symbolon is Doctrine (Theology). **Note:** Professional Staff seeking Advanced or Advanced Renewal Certification are to fill out the Symbolon form in its entirety and place it in their certification folder.

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 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**. It is preferable to send the teacher’s certification folders in groups so they are on the same certification cycle.

How is information to be recorded 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. Note: when being certified for Basic, please do not send the yellow certification folder.

Front Cover: Fill in your personal information.

- The Basic Certification completion date may be filled in once you received your Basic Certificate document from the Diocese.
- The Advanced and Advanced Renewal completion date will be completed by the Office for Catechesis & Evangelization.

Other Panels: There are separate panels for recording diocesan inservices, school inservices, and individual studies. Entries should be completed & initialed by your administrator.

What goes in the folder?

Fall and spring Diocesan inservice certificates received for participation/completion of a program should be placed in the folder. Study reflections/answers to discussion questions or completed booklets (not agendas) are also to be kept in the folder to document completion. There should be matching paperwork or documentation for each item listed on the folder.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Contact your administrator with questions regarding the process, Ann Lankford at the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization alankford@diolc.org for questions regarding Advanced Cert. and Beth Johnson bjohnson@diolc.org if you would like to check out or purchase resources.

