

## 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 administrator, teacher, and counselor - all professional contracted staff who are full-time or 50% or more part-time, including Dean of Students, Athletic Directors & Campus Min., etc.

### How do I earn Basic Certification? Completing New Teacher Formation & Symbolon

- All professional staff hired since 2023 have three years to complete New Teacher Formation. Three face-to-face classes: 1) Teaching as Ministry, 2) Scripture, and 3) Prayer and Sacraments as well as Part I of Symbolon DVD Program are to be completed to earn Basic Certification. The face-to-face classes will be offered in August to keep new teachers in the classroom and reduce the amount of substitutes.
- Teachers and administrators who were hired spring–summer of 2022 or earlier, who have not completed Basic Certification, will need to complete their New Teacher Formation face-to-face sessions *and* Symbolon Part 1 this academic year, by August 2024.
- All professional staff new to the Diocese, including teachers transferring from another Diocese or who have earned a degree in Theology or related studies, must attend Teaching as Ministry. The Office for Catechesis & Evangelization will need to review college transcripts and certification hours from another Diocese to give proper credit.
- The 10 sessions of Symbolon Part One and workbook are to be completed with a group of teachers on a regular schedule. (For purchase from [catholic.market/programs/symbolon](http://catholic.market/programs/symbolon)). One new teacher may join with others at a nearby school or wait till the second year.
  - After completing Symbolon Part One, the Certification Completion Form (available at [diolc.org/schools](http://diolc.org/schools) then scroll to Religious Certification Program) is to be filled out in its entirety, including dates, initials, and signatures, and emailed to the Office for Catholic Schools. After 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 three-year period, the new teacher will also be receiving certification hours from the Diocesan fall and spring Faith Inservices provided for all teachers by the Offices for Catholic Schools and Catechesis & Evangelization. These hours apply toward Advanced Certification.

- New Teachers / administrators are encouraged to complete a *Franciscan at Home* online workshop with a group during their first year: *The Mission of the Catholic School & the Role of the Teacher* and/or *The Human Person in God's Loving Plan*.

### 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 Renewal?

Once Advanced Certification is earned, Advanced Renewal continues as long as a teacher is working at a Catholic School. Advanced Renewal involves receiving 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 teachers need to earn individual 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 each year.

*Franciscan At Home* online learning system is the *preferred* means of earning certification hours. One workshop per year is recommended and are to be completed within small groups, Workshops are worth 6 hours of credit. Each learner's responses are to be recorded on *Franciscan At Home* to receive credit with the printed page that shows the completed workshop(s) and placed in the Folder. Two workshops are required for Advanced or Advanced Renewal: 1) *The Mission of the Catholic School & the Role of the Teacher* and 2) *The Human Person in God's Loving Plan*. **\*Starting July 2025, we will be giving 4 hours per *Franciscan at Home* workshop to correspond with the other Dioceses in the state.**

- For professional staff working toward initial Advanced Certification, they will need to earn 12 hours from the Diocese and 6 hours from the school annually. Being part of a group is the ideal. These hours are earned through *Franciscan at Home*, by qualified speakers, or with materials approved ahead of time by the Office.
- Approved resources from the Office for Catechesis are listed at the Diocesan website: [diolc.org/schools](http://diolc.org/schools) "Religious Certification Program."
- Up to 15 hours of credit are available for attending 10 sessions of Part II of Symbolon. The Symbolon form is to be filled out in its entirety & placed in one's certification folder.

## Why does each contracted, professional person on staff need a certification folder?

It is each person's responsibility to record religious formation hours earned, providing supporting paperwork for the **current five-year period**, and kept on file by each building administrator. The folders are to be categorized in good order according to **Diocesan inservices**, **school inservices**, and **individual hours**. It is preferable to send all certification folders of the school at the same time with sufficient hours so as to be 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, include matching paperwork, 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 Ad. Renewal completion date will be completed by the Office for C & E.

**Other Panels:** Record diocesan & school inservices & individual studies, initialed by the administrator. Fall and spring Diocesan inservice certificates, current study reflections / answers to discussion questions, completed booklets (not agendas) are to be kept in folders to document completion.

## Who do I contact if I have questions?

Contact your administrator with questions regarding the process; Ann Lankford at Catechesis & Evangelization [alankford@diolc.org](mailto:alankford@diolc.org) for questions regarding college religion & transfer credit; Beth Johnson [bjohnson@diolc.org](mailto:bjohnson@diolc.org) for questions regarding Basic, Advanced & Adv. Ren.

