
SEAT OF WISDOM DIOCESAN INSTITUTE

Certification for Parish Catechetical Leaders

I. Preamble

A. What is Certification?

For the past 10 years teachers have been participating in the in the Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute to fulfill expectations for catechetical certification expectations. Prior to Seat of Wisdom, teacher and catechists in the Diocese sought ongoing formation through the F.O.R.E.M program. The Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute (SOWDI) is a program of adult faith formation and catechetical certification in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Madison. It offers a comprehensive and systematic formation and aims to draw its participants into deeper communion with Jesus Christ, strengthening them to be more effective witnesses and teachers of the Gospel. SOWDI houses both live and online (Franciscan at Home). The Seat of Wisdom Certification is offered by the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis.

B. Why is it important?

Catechetical formation for Administrators, Parish Catechetical Leaders and Catholic School teachers has been a long time expectation in the Diocese of Madison. In order to properly give catechetical formation to their students, “Professional Catechists” ought to be receiving personal and professional formation. The General Directory for Catechesis states, “...Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists...Therefore, it is necessary to plan for and participate in formation that assists a teacher/catechist ‘to mature as a person, believer and as an apostle.’” GDC 234, 238. Finally, in 2008 the Bishops of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference reiterated the necessity for all professional lay catechists to seek and maintain certification in order to maintain their employment.

C. Who needs to get it?

The Institute is for all adults seeking to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic faith. In addition to offering general certificates for adult formation, the institute also offers certification for parish catechists, Catholic school principals and teachers, directors and coordinators of religious education, youth ministers, and all those involved in any form of adult religious education. Other personnel serving in parish leadership positions are encouraged to register and attend as well.

II. General Requirements for all Parish Catechetical Leaders

- A. Annual participation in one full-day retreat organized by the diocesan Office of Evangelization & Catechesis (OEC).
- B. Annual completion of 6 credit hours of approved catechetical coursework.
- C. Working toward Basic Catechetical Certification until complete.
- D. Working toward Advanced Catechetical Certification after obtaining Basic Certification.
- E. Maintaining certification credits hours each year (July – June).

III. Requirements for Obtaining Basic Certification

As of 2021, the coursework required for Basic Certification in the Diocese of Madison is being offered through the Franciscan at Home online learning system. In addition to meeting all the general annual requirements listed above, Parish Catechetical Leaders must complete the following series of online workshops in order to obtain Basic Certification.

Each workshop takes 2–4 hours to complete. Every workshop is worth 3 credit hours. Completing 2 workshops per year and attending a yearly retreat, therefore, fulfills the required 12 credit hours of coursework per year and leads to Basic Certification.

A. Basic Certification for Parish Catechetical Leaders (*Parish Catechetical Leader Track*)

1. Personality and Profile of A Successful PCL	7. Planning for Success: Program Organization and Assessment
2. The Kerygma: Key Doctrines	8. Recruiting, Training and Forming Catechists I
3. Prayer: Introduction to the Spiritual life of the Catechist	9. Recruiting, Training and Forming Catechists II
4. Teaching Catechesis for Conversion	10. Religious Education Material Evaluation and Selection
5. Essential Link Between Liturgy and Catechesis	11. First Penance and First Eucharist Preparation
6. Family as the Context of Catechesis	12. Confirmation Preparation

Or

B. Parish Catechist Track

1. The Vocation of the Catechist	7. The Ecclesial Method
2. Jesus: The Christocentricity of Catechesis	8. Child Catechetical Methodologies & Learning Styles
3. The Deposit of Faith: An Introduction to the Catechism	9. Adult Catechetical Methodologies & Learning Styles
4. Essential Link Between Liturgy and Catechesis	10. Philosophical Foundations of Catechetics
5. Scripture: The Heart of Catechesis	11. Prayer: Introduction to the spiritual Life of the Catechist
6. Sacred Scripture: The Big Picture	12. The Trinity
	13. Christ: His Person & Works

*if you would like permission to choose an alternative Basic Track, please contact the OEC for instructions.

C. Two-Year Transitional Window

Those who are already part-way through the old process of Basic Certification have two options:

1. The traditional core basic courses will be made available for two more years, so that all those who prefer to complete the old process of Basic Certification can do so. These courses will be offered in a live in-person setting until Spring 2023:

CAT 103	Sacred Scripture 1-4 & The Catechism of the Catholic Church	6 hours
CAT 101e	Sacred Scripture 5-12	6 hours
CAT 107	The Creed: What Catholics Believe	6 hours
CAT 109	Sacraments: Celebration of the Christian Mystery	6 hours
CAT 111	Life in Christ: Christian Morality	6 hours
CAT 115	Christian Prayer	6 hours
CAT 117	Evangelization	6 hours
CAT 119	Catechesis	6 hours

2. Your second option is to start at the beginning of the series of online workshops available through Franciscan at Home and complete Basic Certification by completing 2 workshops per contract year.

IV. Requirements for Obtaining Advanced Certification

In addition to meeting all the general annual requirements listed above, Parish Catechetical Leaders must work toward/complete Advanced Certification. By completing one of the approved advanced tracks (SOWDI Live or Any other Franciscan at home track) a PCL will receive an Advanced Certificate. Upon the completion of 36 credit hours of SOWDI live or Franciscan at Home courses, an individual will receive an advanced certificate. (The Franciscan at Home courses of study are approximately 12 workshop equaling 36 credit hours.)

Approved learning tracks and courses of studies for Advanced Certification include:

- A.** Traditional advanced courses will continue to be offered throughout the year for those who prefer live in-person learning.

- B.** Choose your own course of studies from a variety of learning tracks available on the Franciscan at Home online learning system, including the Catechist Track (CT); Catechumenal Ministry Track (RCIA); First Proclamation and Evangelization Track (FPE); Forming Faith at Home Track (FFH); Four Pillars of the Catechism Track (FPC); Ministry of Parenting Track (MP); Pastoral Accompaniment Track (PA); and Youth Ministry Track (YM). Advanced tracks are not limited to this list, Franciscan at Home is continually adding to their course list.

V. Frequently Asked Questions

A. How do I begin the process?

Every year, each principal/parish catechetical leaders should update the list of faculty/catechists with the OEC.

B. How are records maintained?

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will continue to track certification hours in the SOWDI certification system on the Diocesan Data System.

C. What if I am in Advanced or Maintenance Mode?

If an individual has already achieved Basic or Advanced certification, he/she can simply enter into the process at the level of certification that he/she is at. Individuals do not need to repeat Basic level certification. If an individual is in Advanced or Maintenance he/she can simply choose a track of interest from Franciscan at Home. All teachers are subject to the direction and authority of the principal.

D. Can I get credit for other study and work?

In the past we have allowed personal study and other professional /faith centered events and opportunities to qualify for SOWDI credit. Going forward only SOWDI live courses and Franciscan online coursework will qualify for SOWDI credit.

E. How do I receive a certificate?

TBD. In the past the Diocese of Madison generated contracts upon completion of a level of certification.

F. What happens if an individual does not comply?

All Parish Catechetical leaders are expected to comply which is explicit in hiring/contracts.

G. Do those in Getting Started need to complete certification hours?

All those PCL's who are actively attending Getting Started are not expected to complete additional credit hours. PCLs will begin accumulating certification in the year following the Getting Started year.

H. Do mentors have to complete Certification Hours?

All PCLs who agree to serve as a parish mentor for the Franciscan at Home program in their parish must first complete the Mentor Training Course. Mentors will be expected to choose 6 hours of additional formation (retreat or online) for their certification expectations.

I. Others?