



**Associate of Religious Education
Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

In 2005, the United States Bishops published *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* and the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis put forth a revised certification process for parish Directors (DRE) and Coordinators (CRE) of Religious Education. The Bishops' document calls for well formed and informed Lay Ecclesial Ministers in parishes. The document asks that attention be paid to four areas of formation: human (self-understanding), spiritual, intellectual (theology and human sciences) and pastoral. It notes that Lay Ecclesial Ministers are normally employed full or part time by a parish, have adequate training for their role (normally, a college degree with theology credits) and are recognized as a leader by the faith community and the Archdiocese. This description is the basis for understanding the role and expectations of Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education.

We recognize, however, that there are others who function in a role that does not meet these criteria. There are those who oversee one aspect of a religious education program in a parish under the leadership of the Pastor or a Director or Coordinator of Religious Education who may or may not be paid and who work part time. These persons are normally not considered as Lay Ecclesial Ministers and, therefore, it is not necessary to meet the requirements for DRE or CRE certification.

There are also those who may be responsible for the entire program but do not have the necessary college level courses at this time to qualify as Directors or Coordinators of Religious Education. Many have the gifts and talents of leadership, organization, and communication, a willingness to continue developing skills, a desire to grow in their own faith life and the ability to recruit and form catechists.

Associate of Religious Education (ARE) certification was developed to recognize the leadership of those who are not Directors or Coordinators of Religious Education. This is a way of acknowledging the valuable service AREs provide to parishes without requiring college level courses which may not be needed for the role that they play.

Like DRE and CRE formation, the ARE certification process is organized around 4 major components: Spiritual formation, theological formation, skills formation and experience. It calls for continuing efforts to grow in the role with the expectation to renew on a regular basis.

Unlike DRE and CRE formation, the expected theological formation for an ARE is the same as that of a parish catechist. However, renewal of ARE certification involves more advanced skill development suitable to those in catechetical leadership. This kind of skill development can usually be accomplished at the local level at a minimum expense.

The outline of the process follows. Application forms can be found on our web site at www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec or by contacting your regional Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Please contact us with questions and guidance through the process.

Cincinnati: 513-421-3131, cincyoec@catholiccincinnati.org

Dayton: 937-223-4075, daytonoec@catholiccincinnati.org

Sidney: 937-498-1192, sidneymediacycenter@catholiccincinnati.org

**Associate of Religious Education
Certification Process**
Effective January 1, 2008

INITIAL CERTIFICATION

Certificate expires three years after the date of issuance.

A. Advanced Catechist Certification is required.

B. Skills

These skills are to be attained through workshops or other learning experiences.

1. Recognizes their call to leadership flowing from Christ's call to discipleship.
2. Understands the meaning of catechesis as explained in the GDC and NDC.
3. Has knowledge of Basic Liturgical Practices
4. Understands the various levels of interrelating: bishop, pastor, diocese, parents and commissions.
5. Has experience in their area of specialty (e.g., RCIA, Sacrament Prep, E.C., etc.)
6. Understands and implements OEC policies, guidelines and practices.

C. Experience

- Three years experience as a catechist
- One year experience as a parish Associate of Religious Education

D. Formation

- One personal spiritual growth experience
Examples include:
 1. Serving as a liturgical minister
 2. Serving on parish committees, RCIA Team, etc
 3. Participating in RENEW or another parish renewal program
 4. Belonging to a Bible study group, prayer group, or small faith community
 5. Receiving spiritual direction
 6. Attending retreats or days of recollection
 7. Volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen
 8. Visiting shut-ins
 9. Involvement in social justice efforts

RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

Initial certification is granted for three years and must be renewed every five years thereafter.

A. Course Requirements

- 20 clock hours of Theological Education can be attained by attending LPMP courses, Developing Our Leadership Potential (in Northern region), catechetical leadership conference, college courses, online courses, etc.

B. Formation and Skills

- 20 clock hours to be attained through workshops or other learning experiences. All three (3) categories must be represented. Please note these are examples.

Personal and spiritual identity:

1. Knows oneself (strengths, gifts, and limitations); sets boundaries to maintain a healthy balance and integrates personal goals and gospel values
2. Understands and operates out of a Code of Ethics

Catechesis:

3. Helps the parish community carry out its role as a catechizing agent.
4. Is familiar with relevant Canon laws and civil laws.
5. Understands the RCIA as adapted for children.
6. Is familiar with the catechumenal process as a model for all catechesis.
7. Administers the catechist certification process including regular observation and evaluation of catechists.
8. Provides opportunities for ongoing catechist formation according to the Archdiocesan catechist certification process.
9. Provides appropriate resources and encourages their use.
10. Designs, develops, directs, evaluates and adjusts catechetical program(s).
11. Explores various models for catechesis (classroom, WCC, sacrament preparation)

Management and supervision skills:

12. Recruits and supervises catechists, aides and other personnel needed for the catechetical program.
13. Keeps appropriate records and organizes them properly.
14. Works within the allotted budget.
15. Plans and uses their time.
16. Possesses effective communication skills.
17. Communicates with pastor, parish commissions, parents, catechists to keep them informed of the religious education efforts of the parish.
18. Utilizes the Archdiocesan offices and agencies for direction and resources.
19. Understands the principles of conflict management

C. Experience

- currently working at a staff level position

D. Formation

- One current or on-going personal spiritual growth experience (See above for examples)