



VOCARE

Called to teach.

The Vocare Religious Education Certification Process

Introduction

Before He ascended into heaven, the Risen Lord commissioned the Apostles saying, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20). In *Evangelii Gaudium* (33), Pope Francis tells us that today more than ever, this mission to evangelize calls for *boldness and creativity*; for a *willingness to rethink our goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization*; and for rediscovering that 'discipleship' and 'mission' are inseparable. In other words, it calls for authentic missionary conversion.

The Office for Evangelization and Discipleship (OED) of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is charged with fostering an Archdiocesan, parish-centered culture of Disciples Making Disciples. We continue in our mission of assisting our Archbishop in *directing and moderating all the catechetical activities of the Archdiocese (General Directory for Catechesis 265, National Directory for Catechesis 59)*. The Vocare Certification Process and its requirements provide the means by which we empower others to effectively evangelize, disciple and teach the faith at every level.

By virtue of their ministry, Parish Catechetical Leaders, Parish Catechists, Catholic School Principals, and Catholic School Teachers, especially Religion Teachers, are called to be role models for the adults and youth they teach. They are called upon to be well formed in Catholic teaching, dedicated to ongoing formation, and witnesses to the Catholic way of life. To help them fulfill this role, the Vocare process provides a means for ongoing religious formation in the Catholic Faith for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Built into the Vocare process is support of Missionary Discipleship. Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium* that "baptism makes us 'missionary disciples' (120)." "To be called' by God (*vocare*) to catechetical ministry is a particular call to missionary discipleship. Disciples are formed through the sharing of faith-experiences with others. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus says, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Mt 18:20). It's in these 'gatherings' that we are supported in efforts to grow in our relationship with Christ. The word *catechesis* means 'echo.' Through the telling of the stories of God's presence in our lives, we come to experience the richness of God's call to us as catechists as we 'echo' God's love for others.

Vocare Overview

The call to be a catechist, rooted in our baptismal call, requires commitment to formation. The Vocare process includes study, practicing the Catholic faith through a life rooted in the Sacraments and prayer, as well as practical disciplines of faith as experienced in small groups. As a result, all catechists, religion teachers, catechetical leaders and principals in the parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati – full and part-time, paid and volunteer – are required to complete ten (10) credits per year in Vocare to remain certified in their ministry. Generally, each class within Vocare fulfills one credit. Additionally, at varying times, those in catechetical ministry will be required to have their teaching of a religion class observed, complete reflection papers, participate in small faith-sharing groups, and other tasks specified by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In these ways, the Archdiocese cultivates evangelizing catechetical leadership that fosters a culture of missionary discipleship.

Vocare organizes topical classes in a comprehensive curriculum into groups called ‘badges.’ There are three introductory formation badges (**CALL**, **WITNESS**, and **PROCLAIM**) that form new catechists. A catechist progresses through these badges *in order* (**CALL** → **WITNESS** → **PROCLAIM**), must complete each of these badges within two years of starting them, and must begin the next badge upon completion of the previous. In order for a catechist to grow in their ministry and formation, the completion of the introductory formation badges (**CALL**, **WITNESS**, and **PROCLAIM**) is limited to one badge per fiscal year.

Upon successful completion of the **PROCLAIM** badge, a catechist begins the **INSPIRE** badge. All catechetical personnel in the Archdiocese will complete the **INSPIRE** badge. At this point in certification, the Vocare process requires all those in catechetical ministry to be involved in a Missionary Discipleship faith-sharing group along with the completion of their annual credits. Subsequent badges in **ENRICH** may be obtained by taking a series of classes arranged around a theme, or a catechist has the option to take a class a la carte as they desire.

Active Certification is based on 10 credits of formation per year. Of these 10, three (3) may be outside the Vocare format. Workshops, days of reflection, conferences, etc. that are theological or catechetical in nature – *as approved by the OED* – can be applied toward annual credits. The 10 classes in the **CALL**, **WITNESS**, and **PROCLAIM** badges are arranged in bundles of 4 classes, 3 classes and 3 classes to accommodate the possibility of 3 outside credits. It should be noted that a bundle must be completed within one calendar year of purchase date, or permission to use it will expire.

An exception to the ‘3 outside credits only’ rule exists in the case of college-level courses. These include – but are not limited to – completion with a passing grade of a semester-long Catholic university course in theology or catechetics, any VLCCFF course from the University of Dayton, and any semester-long course from the Athenaeum of Ohio, including the LPMP program.

Definitions and Terms

Vocare → the name of the certification process for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Badge → a group of classes organized for varying purposes



The **CALL**, **WITNESS**, **PROCLAIM** and **INSPIRE** badges each have their own Formation Plan or set of classes totaling 10 credits per badge. The numerous **ENRICH** badges are each a series of classes arranged around a particular topic or theme. These vary in credits per badge, depending on the number of classes in each.

VIRTUS® Compliant/Decree on Child Protection → has completed a VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children* introductory workshop, has an active background check, active with continuing education through monthly VIRTUS® bulletins, and is considered compliant and active by the Safe Environment Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Growth in Personal Faith → an activity such as liturgical minister, retreat, spiritual reading, etc.

Formation Plan → the systematic curriculum containing the classes for each badge

Formation Pathing → a suggested path of classes based on the catechist's prior knowledge and experience

Missionary Discipleship → a small faith-sharing group

Reflection → a journal of questions specific to each badge

Observation/Post-Observation Conference → the observation of a catechetical session by a veteran catechist with a follow-up debriefing

Veteran Catechist → a certified catechetical leader (DRE, CRE or PCL) or an advanced catechist or principal who has completed the **INSPIRE** badge.

Outside Event → a college course, or a workshop or in-service on specific theological concepts or catechetical methodology that can be submitted for outside credit in Vocare

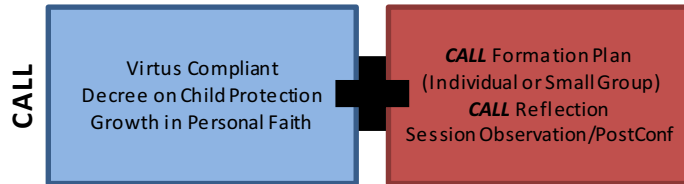
Vocare Administrator → the person identified at each parish and school who is responsible for coordinating the Vocare process.

Archdiocesan Vocare Support → Archdiocesan staff responsible for administering the day-to-day needs associated with Vocare.

Requirements of the Badges - CALL



New Parish Catechists and Catholic School Teachers of Religion will participate in the classes for the **CALL** Badge. These classes provide introductory information about the Catholic faith as well as catechetical information about teaching the faith. They include lessons on prayer, the creed, sacraments, methods for teaching, etc. They will guide the new Catechist in their vocation with children and adults as they answer the call to catechetical ministry.



There are three prerequisites for beginning the **CALL** badge. A catechist must have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* workshop, must be VIRTUS® compliant, and be involved in an activity for growth in their personal faith. Upon completion of the pre-requisites, the catechist begins the **CALL** Formation Plan. There are several options for completing the classes within the Formation Plan, and these will be described later in this document.

The classes in the **CALL** Formation Plan are bundled as follows:

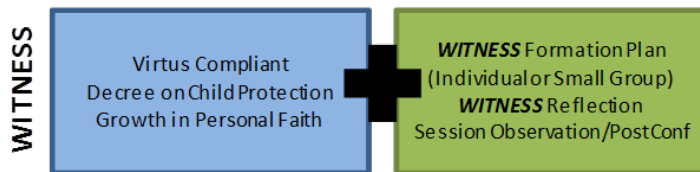
<u>Call Foundations</u>	<u>Pillars of Faith</u>	<u>Spirituality and Formation</u>
Introduction	The Creed	Person & Spirituality of the Catechist
Prayer and Evangelization	Sacraments	Sermon on the Mount
The Practice of Prayer	Life in Christ	Foundation of Theology of the Body
Catechesis Methodology		

Upon successful completion of the classes required for the **CALL** badge, the catechist writes a short Reflection Paper that is housed in the **CALL** documents. Subsequently, a catechetical session led by the catechist is observed by a veteran catechist, who will take note of the use of the catechetical method and prayer in the session. Finally, the veteran catechist will affirm the positive aspects of the session and offer suggestions for improvement. Once these requirements are completed, the **CALL** badge is recorded in the Vocare system. The **CALL** badge must be completed within two years of beginning work on the badge.

Requirements of the Badges - WITNESS



Upon completion of the **CALL** badge, the learner proceeds with the lessons in the **WITNESS** badge. Having been introduced to the basics of our faith, the **WITNESS** badge continues with further development of these concepts. These classes provide more in-depth information about the Catholic faith as well as catechetical information about teaching the faith. They include material about prayer, Jesus Christ, morality, the sacraments, etc. They will continue to guide the catechist in their vocation with children and adults as they answer the call to catechetical ministry.



There are three prerequisites for beginning the **WITNESS** badge. A catechist must have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* workshop, must be VIRTUS® compliant, and be involved in an activity for growth in their own personal faith. The catechist then begins the **WITNESS** Formation Plan. There are several options for completing the classes within the Formation Plan, and these will be described later in this document.

The classes in the **WITNESS** Formation Plan are bundled as follows:

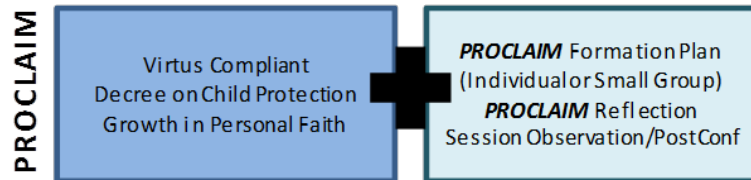
<u>Witness Foundations</u>	<u>Created in God's Image</u>	<u>Liturgy and Sacraments</u>
Overcoming Difficulties in Prayer	The Trinity and Creation	Liturgy and Sacraments
Those Who Are Catechized	Jesus Christ	Baptism / Confirmation
The Incarnation	The Language of the Body	The Blessed Sacrament
The Moral Law		

Upon successful completion of the classes required for the **WITNESS** badge, the catechist writes a short Reflection Paper housed in the **WITNESS** documents. Subsequently, a catechetical session led by the catechist is observed by a veteran catechist, who will take note of the use of the catechetical method and prayer in the session. Finally, the veteran catechist will affirm the positive aspects of the session and offer suggestions for improvement. Once these requirements are completed, the **WITNESS** badge is recorded in the Vocare system. The **WITNESS** badge must be completed within two years of beginning work on the badge.

Requirements of the Badges - PROCLAIM



Upon completion of the **WITNESS** badge, the learner proceeds with the lessons in the **PROCLAIM** badge. The **PROCLAIM** badge contains further development of theological/catechetical concepts. These classes provide more in-depth information about the Catholic faith as well as catechetical information about teaching the faith. They include lessons on prayer, scripture, liturgy, etc. They will continue to guide the Catechist in their vocation with children and adults as they answer the call to catechetical ministry.



There are three prerequisites for beginning the **PROCLAIM** badge. A catechist must have participated in a *Protecting God's Children* workshop, must be VIRTUS® compliant, and be involved in an activity for growth in their own personal faith. The catechist then begins the **PROCLAIM** Formation Plan. There are several options for completing the classes within the Formation Plan, and these will be described later in this document.

The classes in the **PROCLAIM** Formation Plan are bundled as follows:

Proclaim Foundations

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

Catechesis: Evangelization

Liberation of Humanity from Sin

Origins of Scripture

Living Out the Faith

Docility to the Holy Spirit

Gift versus Use

Revelation

The Mass and Our Spiritual Mother

Mary, Our Spiritual Mother

Mass, Part I: Intro / Liturgy of Word

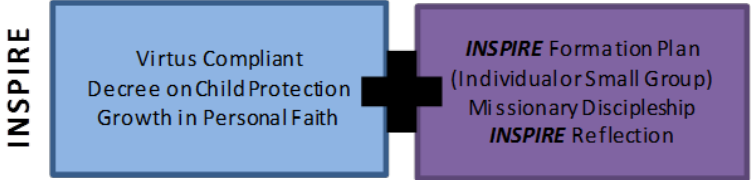
Mass, Part II: Liturgy of Eucharist

Upon successful completion of the classes required for the **PROCLAIM** badge, the catechist writes a short Reflection Paper housed in the **PROCLAIM** documents. Subsequently, a catechetical session led by the catechist is observed by a veteran catechist, who will take note of the use of the catechetical method and prayer in the session. Finally, the veteran catechist will affirm the positive aspects of the session and offer suggestions for improvement. Once these requirements are completed, the **PROCLAIM** badge is recorded in the Vocare system. The **PROCLAIM** badge must be completed within two years of beginning work on it.

Requirements of the Badges - **INSPIRE**



The **INSPIRE** badge is designed to be an inspirational launch into independent study for Parish Catechetical Leaders and Catechists, and the Catholic School Principals and Teachers of Religion. Using the *Wild Goose* series from the Augustine Institute, the learner experiences a deepening of God’s love and transforming power through the Holy Spirit. ‘Wild goose’ is a Celtic Christian symbol of the Holy Spirit. As the Augustine Institute writes: *We are able to experience the beauty and freedom of God’s Love by the Holy Spirit... When we experience God’s Love we come to understand in a powerful way that we are in fact “lovable.” God’s Love reveals our beauty and goodness before him.*



As with all badges, the pre-requisites for beginning the **INSPIRE** badge include the *Protecting God’s Children* workshop, VIRTUS® compliance, and an activity for growth in their own personal faith. The catechist then begins the **INSPIRE** Formation Plan of the *Wild Goose* series. The series can be watched individually, or can be watched in a group to facilitate discussion and interaction with the material.

A deeper dimension of the catechetical ministry is highlighted in the **INSPIRE** badge with the added commitment to Missionary Discipleship. A “missionary disciple” is both a disciple and a missionary – a disciple being a follower of Jesus Christ and a missionary being one who goes out into the world on a mission. The knowledge of a teacher, while very important, is not what makes them an effective transmitter of God’s Word. They must be a disciple – one who follows the Lord and devotes their life to him. As Blessed Pope Paul VI is so often quoted, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he *does* listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” Missionary Discipleship is the requirement to participate in an ongoing discipleship group. Small faith-communities are essential to disciples because they offer an opportunity to develop relationships of faith, and in turn, deepen our relationship with Christ. They become true “schools for discipleship” (*National Directory for Catechesis* 29) in which we are apprenticed in the heart and habits of the Christian life and we, in turn, are initiated into the “art of accompaniment” of others (*Evangelii Gaudium* 169). The Missionary Discipleship experience of friendship, accompaniment, and on-going conversion will help us become a better catechist who’s lived faith spills over into our catechesis as we accompany others in their own growth as disciples of Jesus Christ. Please see the Vocare information on Missionary Discipleship for further details.

Upon successful completion of the *Wild Goose* series, the learner writes a short Reflection Paper housed in the **INSPIRE** documents. The **INSPIRE** badge is then recorded in the Vocare system. The entire **INSPIRE** badge (*Wild Goose* series) must be completed in one year and fulfills 10 annual credits.

Requirements of the Badges - ENRICH



The **INSPIRE** badge completes the formal levels of certification in the *Vocare* process. After attaining the **INSPIRE** badge, the learner goes on to independent study. The final requirement of the **INSPIRE** badge is Formation Pathing. This assessment will offer suggestions as to areas of theology/ catechetics that may be of interest to the learner to 'fill in the gaps' of possible weak areas in theological or catechetical topics. The learner is free to take advantage of the Formation Pathing suggestions, or may take any class of interest to them. All these classes – including classes from the other badges that may have been 'tested out' of – are available in the **ENRICH** section of *Vocare*. Upon completion of the **INSPIRE** badge, the learner is free to engage in any and all classes offered through the *Vocare* system.

Some classes are arranged by similar topics and are organized into **ENRICH** badges. These badges use content from the *Institute of Catholic Culture*, *FORMED*, *My Catholic Faith Delivered*, and numerous other resources. Additional **ENRICH** badges will be added annually to consider the catechetical needs of those in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and to provide a comprehensive curriculum throughout the *Vocare* process. Catechists are not required to complete **ENRICH** badges. These badges are available for those who wish to study particular content. The requirement for certification continues to be 10 credits per year.

Completing Badges

There are several options for completing the classes within a Formation Plan. The options vary in engagement, leadership, and cost. There are four options:

Option 1: Individual Use

In this option, individual students access online content independently. Students pay full price for each lesson in a badge, and complete the work individually.

Option 2: Small Group Live Class Event – *No Online Content*

In this option, the Instructor (who must be a certified catechetical leader or principal) requests and downloads the teacher manuals for a bundle of classes. The Instructor uses these manuals to teach the classes 'live' at an onsite location in the parish or school. Students complete the classes with the instructor and their attendance is recorded for credit in the *Vocare* system. The teacher manuals are free to the instructor, and the student pays \$15 for the total bundle taught within the live class event.

Option 3: Small Group Live Class Event – *Instructor Only Has Access to Online Content*

In this option, the Instructor (who must be a certified catechetical leader or principal) uses the online content to display or teach in the onsite setting. The Instructor purchases the lessons for the entire bundle. The student enrolls on the *Vocare* website under the 'live class' area and selects and pays \$15 for the event setup

for the bundle.

Option 4: Small Group Discussion Group – *Instructor and Students Each Access Online Content*

In this option, *the Instructor and the students* use the online content individually. The Instructor invites students to engage in group discussion after completing a lesson or a bundle of lessons. The Instructor and students each pay full price for bundle.

Vocare Credits for Outside Catechetical Events

As mentioned earlier, active certification is based on 10 credits of theological formation per year. Of these 10, three (3) may be outside the Vocare format. Workshops, days of reflection, conferences, etc., that are theological in nature – *as approved by the OED* – can be applied toward annual credits.

'Outside Events' fall into three categories:

1. Pre-Approved Events

These include completion with a passing grade of a semester-long Catholic university course in theology or catechetics as follows:

- A semester-long Ohio Catholic university course in theology or catechetics (outside Ohio university courses must be pre-approved)
- Any VLCFF course from the University of Dayton
- Any semester-long course from the Athenaeum of Ohio, including the LPMP program.

A transcript or certificate of the course must be submitted to the Vocare system by emailing a scan to VocareSupport@CatholicCincinnati.org. The course will be posted in the Vocare system as completion of 10 credits for the *fiscal year the transcript is dated*. There will be no 'carry-over' of credits from one year to another. Regardless of the number of college courses taken, only 10 credits will be applied in the system annually.

Procedure: complete Event Submission form; email it *with scanned transcript* to Vocare support.

2. Seminars/Conferences

These events include workshops within the conference that are on specific theological concepts or catechetical methodology that are at least one hour in length. The learner submits a completed 'event' in the Vocare system with the information required on the Event Submission form. This form includes a description (minimum 200 words) of the concepts learned in the workshop and how they will help the learner catechetically. Each event/workshop will be given one credit per submission, *pending OED approval*. Regardless of the number of workshops attended/submitted, a maximum of three credits will be permitted per conference. There will be no 'carry-over' of conference credits from one year to another.

Procedure: complete Event Submission form and email it to VocareSupport

3. Other Events

These events include parish and/or school workshops and/or in-service opportunities that take place at the local level. These events are planned far ahead and must be submitted to the Archdiocesan VocareSupport for pre-approval to ensure adequate content for credit. The learner is required to submit an Event Submission form, which includes a reflection (minimum 200 words) on the concepts learned in the workshop and how they will help the learner catechetically. Each event/workshop will be given one credit per submission, *pending OED pre-approval*.

Procedure: Instructor submits *Event Pre-Approval* to VocareSupport *before* event. Learner completes *Event Submission* and emails to Vocare support after event

Regardless of the number of workshops attended/submitted, a maximum of three credits will be permitted for events outside the Vocare system annually.

More Information

Information can be found on the Office for Evangelization and Discipleship website. Click on [Vocare](#) for more information.

If you need help using the Vocare system, you can email VocareSupport@CatholicCincinnati.org.

Continuous Improvement

The Office for Evangelization and Discipleship is continuously involved in the study of catechesis as directed by the Catholic Church. Revisions to the Vocare process will be made as appropriate. Updates will be presented to Parish Catechetical Leaders and Catholic School Principals with the expectation that the information is shared with all catechists and teachers of religion. Feedback and suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

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