



Called to teach.

CERTIFICATION AND VOCARE POLICIES

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1. Ongoing Formation and Certification – 10 credits

All catechists both in the parish and Catholic Schools, along with the principals and Catechetical Leaders (CL) in parishes, have an obligation to be well formed and educated in order to teach the Faith. The method approved by the Archbishop is Vocare. This entails not just completing courses for certification but also ongoing formation. The minimum requirement is 10 credits per year in Vocare for those charged with teaching the Faith or responsible for forming those who teach the Faith.

a. Who must be certified?

i. Schools

1. All Teachers of Religion from Kindergarten through Grade 12
2. All Principals, Vice-Principals (or whatever title is given to the person who provides leadership for the school and would be thought of as a 'Principal/Vice Principal')
3. Pre-School Teachers are NOT required to be certified
4. A teacher of religion who rotates out of teaching religion for a school year (and does not maintain their 10 annual credits for religious certification) must complete 10 credits in Vocare before signing a contract to teach religion in a Catholic school again.

5. Consequences

- a. Principals and Teachers of Religion who are not certified are in breach of contract and cannot work/teach until out of breach. They will be on **unpaid administrative leave until they are out of breach of contract** – that is certified.
- b. Principals
 - i. Must be certified.
 - ii. Must ensure that all teachers of religion are in Vocare, marked as such and are certified to allow them to teach.
- c. Teachers of Religion
 - i. Must be certified.

ii. Parishes

1. All DRE/CRE/PCL
2. All Catechists from K – Grade 12 (Pre K teachers are not required to be certified)
3. Priests and Deacons are NOT required to be certified
4. Youth Ministers fall under the Youth Minister Program coordinated via the Office for Youth Evangelization and Discipleship. If the Youth Minister teaches or is responsible for the faith formation of the youth in their charge, that Youth Minister is required to be certified in the Vocare system as well.

2. Transition Time/Exceptions

- a. The online certification system, Vocare, became active in July 2017. To assist in the transition, those teachers, catechists, principals, DRE's, etc. that had achieved any level of certification in the previous system were NOT required to begin on-going formation in Vocare until the 2019/2020 fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).
- b. New Teachers to the *Archdiocese of Cincinnati* (AOC) School System are able to use the required Teach Lead Serve (TLS) program as their 10 credits for the first year – as long as TLS is taken *online in Vocare*.
- c. Parish Catechists also have an 'ease-in curve' for their first 3 years of teaching: Year 1 = 4 credits; Year 2 = 6 credits; Year 3 and following = 10 credits

3. Online (Inside Vocare) Credits vs. Outside Credits

- a. Vocare is an online system that both tracks credits by person as well as provides on-line classes to earn those credits. It is possible for a person to earn all 10 credits per year 'inside' Vocare with online classes only. However, there are many 'outside' events available in a variety of methodologies that would certainly meet the requirements for on-going formation and will be credited to the person. (Following the requirements below.)
- b. In general, the split of the 10 credits can be 7 credits in Vocare with online classes and 3 credits for outside classes.
- c. There are outside events that can earn more than 1 – 3 credits, such as general college or more in-depth courses in theology or catechetics. These are described below.

4. Outside Courses - Catholic University Course/College Course

- a. A completed semester college course that meets the requirements listed below with a grade of C or above will satisfy a year's 10 credits of on-going formation in Vocare. The course must be in either theology or catechetics.
 - i. A transcript of the course must be submitted to the VOCARE System by completing the *University Credit Submission Form* in Vocare located at <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/vocare-university-credit-form/>.
 - ii. Credits apply to the fiscal year that the course was completed in – therefore the transcript must also be submitted that fiscal year – no later than 15 June of that fiscal year.
 - iii. NO PRE-APPROVAL Required – Universities/Colleges
 1. Any class from the Athenaeum of Ohio
 2. Any class from Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF)
 3. St. John Bosco Conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville – participate in conference registered for a particular track
 4. Any Catholic Theology or Catechetical Class from an Ohio Catholic College that is accredited
 - a. Example – A course on the Creed is a Catholic Theology course; A course on Hinduism or Comparative World Religions is NOT a Catholic Theology course
 - iv. PRE-APPROVAL REQUIRED – Universities/Colleges
 1. Catholic Theology or Catechetical Class from a non-Ohio or non-accredited Catholic College, including distance learning.
 2. A non-Catholic Theology Class from a Catholic College – regardless of location
 3. A Theology Class or Non-Theology Class from a Non-Catholic College – regardless of location
 4. Fill out the Pre-Approval Form located at www.catholiccincinnati.org/vocare-event-preapproval-form/ with the information and submit for pre-approval review.

5. Outside Events – Workshops/In-Services/Conferences

- a. There are a number of Outside Events that can be used for Vocare Credits. These events need to be pre-approved and the number of credits determined. All outside courses require:
 - i. Preapproval of the course using the Event Pre-Approval Form at www.catholiccincinnati.org/vocare-event-preapproval-form/ submitted at least 6 weeks before the event. The number of credits is based on the depth of the material, topic/content and the number of hours.

- ii. 100% Attendance, Active Participation and Completion of any requirements – which may include a reflection.
 - iii. Content from a recognizable source and consistent with the Catholic Faith.
 - b. Instructors of local pre-approved events must follow the ‘Who Can Teach’ policy with the exceptions as noted below.
 - c. All outside events approved for credit must be submitted for credit by the user within the same fiscal year. Credits are applied to the fiscal year in which the event/course is completed – otherwise the credits have expired and cannot be used in future fiscal years. Use the Event/Conference/Workshop Submission Form at <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/vocare-conferenceseminarworkshop-credit-submission-form/> to apply for credit.

6. Live Classes

- a. Live classes are group opportunities for learning. There are a variety of ways to conduct these live classes and earn credits within Vocare:
 - i. Option 1 – Small-Group Live Class – No ONLINE CONTENT
 - 1. The qualified instructor (as described in 'Who Can Teach' below) requests the course teacher manual as a guide to teach the live class on site, covers all the materials, and marks students’ attendance online.
 - 2. No refunds are given for those who are signed up and do not complete the course.
 - 3. Details and specifics are available in the 'How To – Live Classes'
 - ii. Option 2 – Small Group Live Class –INSTRUCTOR ONLY has access to ONLINE content
 - 1. The instructor displays the lesson or uses it as a guide to teach the lesson onsite, covers all the materials, and marks students’ attendance online.
 - 2. No refunds are given to anyone who is signed up and does not complete.
 - 3. Details and specifics are available in the ‘How To – Live Classes’
 - iii. Option 3: Instructor and Students ALL have access to ONLINE content
 - 1. The instructor invites students to engage in a group discussion after completing a course or lesson within a course.
 - 2. There is no LIVE class set up. Students earn credits by individually completing the course.
- b. Live Classes are NOT permitted between June 15 and July 1 of each year in order to ensure credits are attributed to that current fiscal year.

7. Who Can Teach

Teaching is described as creating a course and teaching to a class with no videos and no program OR using a teacher’s manual with outline/topics to be taught and/or points that must be covered. This is not facilitation, though a teacher may facilitate a discussion.

- a. Requirements
 - i. Catholic Theology Degree (Catholic College/University).

Facilitation is defined as a person that plays the DVD’s, facilitates the questions and discussion, and takes any questions outside the scope of the DVD to the Parish/School Catechetical Leader. This person must have the approval of the DRE/Pastor/DRE, but it is the course/workbook/video that is doing the teaching. This will be documented on the Live Class Form.

8. Teach Lead Serve

- a. Teach Lead Serve (TLS) is a program required by and managed by the Catholic Schools Office and Principals. All teachers of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati school system were required to take this course when it was initiated and, each year after that, all new teachers to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Schools system were required to complete TLS.
- b. Any first-year teacher in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic School system may complete TLS on line in Vocare and earn 10 credits once fully completed. These 10 credits fulfill the certification requirement for those first-year teachers who are also teachers of religion.
- c. If the school decides to complete TLS in person, this cannot be credited in Vocare. First-year teachers who require certification (teachers of religion) will need to complete 10 Vocare credits *in addition to TLS* if they do not complete TLS with the online Vocare format.

9. School of Faith

School of Faith is a program of adult catechesis designed to provide doctrinal and spiritual formation for Catholic school teachers, administrators, spiritual mentors and individuals.

- a. Teachers of Religion who are participating in School of Faith with their schools are to be enrolled in Vocare and must complete all the requirements of School of Faith in the system. This will earn 10 credits and will fulfill the requirement for on-going formation and certification.
- b. Non-teachers of religion and non-teachers who are participating in School of Faith are encouraged to complete the requirements of School of Faith in the system. If these teachers/employees are set up in the system but are not active in the system, they will be deleted after one year of inactivity.

10. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Montessori-based religious formation program for children

- a. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has three levels of certification – Level 1 (3 – 6 year olds); Level 2 (6 – 9 year olds); and Level 3 (9 – 12 year olds).
- b. Full attendance and active engagement for each of these levels of certification individually would fulfill the on-going formation requirement in Vocare and each would equate to 10 credits.
- c. Teacher must submit a copy of the certificate of completion for each level to VocareSupport@catholiccinati.org
- d. Credits are given for the fiscal year the level was completed and must be submitted by 15 June of that fiscal year.
- e. Teachers are required to continue with the 10 annual credits in Vocare.

11. Hispanic Catechesis (All in Spanish)

The program *Camina con Cristo* is the catechetical certification process for the Latino community in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The requirements of *Camina con Cristo* are fulfilled through the Spanish VLCFF courses from the University of Dayton that culminate with a Certificate in Catechesis for those who have completed the program.

- a. VLCFF is on-line catechesis and formation for Spanish-speaking adults.
- b. The program is 2 years in length, 6 classes per year, 10 credits per class.
- c. Students Enrolled in *Camina con Cristo* will also be set up in VOCARE as a means of tracking certification.
- d. Upon completion of *Camina con Cristo*, graduates will receive a 2-year pause in Vocare requirements due to the extensive nature of the courses. After that 2-year pause, catechists will be expected to earn 10 credits annually in Vocare.

12. Catechist Observation

- a. The purpose of the Observation for Teachers of Religion and Parish Catechists is to provide formation and coaching for these catechists in classroom techniques and, more importantly, how they are sharing the Faith.
- b. Three Observations occur over the first 6 years of catechetical ministry – approximately once every 2 years.
- c. Observations are typically done by the Parish Catechetical Leader or Principal but may be done by an appointed, experienced catechist with at least 8 years of catechetical ministry.
- d. There are forms and more detailed directions on Vocareonline.com under *Catechist Observation Guide*: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Catechist-Observation.pdf>.
- e. While the actual feedback is kept in the catechists file by the parish/school, a completed Catechist Observation Form (found in *Forms and Resources* → *Forms and Resources for Administrators* on Vocareonline.com) is submitted online by the Observer verifying the observation of a particular catechist.

13. Refund Course/Change Course Choice (accidental purchase)

- a. There are **no** course refunds given in Vocare.
- b. Accidental Course Purchase - if a student accidentally purchases the wrong course, a refund will not be issued but rather the correct course will be placed in the student's purchased courses by Vocare Support (under Learn). If there is a difference in cost, that cost will be billed as needed.
- d. All questions regarding course reassignment should be directed to vocaresupport@catholiccincinnati.org.

14. Principals

All Principals, Vice-Principals (or whatever title is given to the person who provides leadership for the school and would be thought of as a 'Principal/Vice Principal')

- a. Principals/Vice-Principals are required to complete their on-going formation in Vocare and earn 10 credits per year.
- b. Principals/Vice Principals are contractually bound to ensure all of their school's data in Vocare is accurate via the Data Quality checks and reports.
- c. Principals are contractually bound to ensure all teachers of religion in their school are certified to teach religion as part of the signing of teacher's contracts. This includes teachers transferring in from another school who previously taught religion and is going to teach religion.
- d. Principals are also required to ensure that all teachers of religion meet the specific requirements to teach religion at the grade level being taught just as they are required to ensure the teacher has completed all educational, licensing and other requirements to teach at the school.
 - i. This includes all new teachers of religion hired by the school who taught elsewhere in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. If they taught religion before, they are expected to be certified when they begin teaching at the new school. To verify their certification status, email vocaresupport@catholiccincinnati.org.

15. New Principals

New Principals must also participate in the New Principal Discipleship Group and submit completed reflection papers. This will earn the new principal 10 credits and complete their requirement in Vocare for their first year.

16. Teacher of Religion Requirements

In addition to the basic requirements to be a teacher in an elementary school or a high school, there are specific requirements to teach religion in a Catholic High School. The principal, as stated above, is contractually bound to ensure teachers meet these requirements in addition to the ongoing certification in Vocare.

- a. Elementary School Teacher of Religion Requirements
 - i. Meet the requirements to teach in the Elementary School
 - ii. 10 Vocare credits per fiscal year in ongoing formation
- b. High School Teacher of Religion Minimum Requirements
 - i. BA in Theology, University Course in Adolescent Developmental Psychology, Secondary Teaching Methodology, Student Teaching, AOC Policy Orientation and AOC High School Graded Course of Study for Religion, OR
 - ii. Bachelor's degree in another field plus a minimum of 30 semester hours of university theology course work (in addition to the courses earned in Adolescent Developmental Psychology, Secondary Teaching and Student Teaching.) These hours must be completed within 4 years from the start of teaching religion at a Catholic High School.
 - iii. 10 credits per fiscal year of ongoing formation in Vocare.
 - iv. For more information see '*Guidelines for Catholic High School Religion Teachers Certification*'
 - v. A teacher of religion who moves from one school to another would be expected to be certified to teach. (If they did not teach religion before, then no certification would be needed to start the year, the teacher would get certified that year). To verify if the teacher was a teacher of religion and if they were certified, email vocaresupport@catholiccincinnati.org

17. Non-Teacher of Religion – Catholic School in Vocare

- a. All teachers or school employees may participate in Vocare. This enables participation in School of Faith, On-line TLS, CEU's and, more importantly, ongoing adult faith formation.
- b. At the beginning of each school year, and at any known change during the school year, the status of the teacher – 'Teacher of Religion' or 'Teacher - Non-Religion' – must be updated in Vocare.
- c. This data quality check is the responsibility of the Principal and can be updated by the Vocare Administrator for the school on the appropriate form, or by sending the change to vocaresupport@catholiccincinnati.org.

18. CEU's

- a. Continuing Education Units may be earned using Vocare Courses.
- b. Please see the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Schools Office for the current ratio of Vocare Credits to CEU credits, and for the process to receive CEU's using Vocare credits.

17. DRE/CRE/PCL

- a. Certification levels are based on education in theology:
 - i. DRE – MA in Theology
 - ii. CRE – BA in Theology
 - iii. PCL – No theology degree (Professional Catechetical Leader)
- b. Requirements
 - i. Completion of the Catechetical Leader course in Vocare
 - ii. Submission of a scanned copy of degree transcript for DRE/CRE
 - iii. 10 credits per fiscal year of ongoing formation in Vocare.

20. Parish Catechists

Parish Catechists have an important role in the parish by sharing the faith with both children and adults. As such, they need to be formed and educated in the Faith and taught how to share their Faith with others.

- a. Certification is intended to assist catechists in teaching their Faith and continuing their formation.
- b. The Archbishop of Cincinnati wants well-formed catechists in both Parishes and Catholic Schools and requires participation in Vocare.

21. Coupons/Grants

- a. Vocare received a grant from the Catholic Education Fund to provide a coupon for parish catechists. These coupons will be available until the funds are exhausted.
- b. The Grant is for first-year catechists in the parish only, and is used to purchase the Call #1 course required of first-year catechists.
- c. Parish Catechetical Leaders can send a coupon request to Vocare Support by using the Grant Request Form <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/vocare-grant-request-form/> for each eligible catechist.
- d. The coupon code is good for one free course and will expire 365 days from date of issue to the Parish Catechetical Leader.
- e. The course, once purchased using the coupon code, will be exactly like any course otherwise purchased in Vocare, including the course expiration of 365 days from date of purchase.

22. Course Expiration

Courses expire 365 days after purchase. If the course is not completed, it will need to be re-purchased.