

Diocese of Gary



Ministry of Initiation Certification

Guidelines, Procedures
& Policies



Introducing...

the official diocesan certification program
for catechists in the ministry of initiation.

Ministry of Initiation Certification

Guidelines & Policies



The apostolic work of the catechist springs from the sacrament of Baptism through which all believers come to share in the prophetic ministry of Christ and the evangelizing mission of the Church.

National Directory for Catechesis, p. 228.

Introduction

In the waters of baptism, the Triune God called us to be disciples. Marked with the banner of Christ, the cross, we were lead to the eucharistic table to share in communion with the Triune God and other disciples. The ministry of catechist not only prepares catechumens for baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, but also helps others to mine the riches of scripture and tradition in order for faith in the Triune God to grow within the lives of catechumens and neophytes. The *General Directory of Catechesis* emphasizes the importance and priority of ministers of initiation of obtaining certification. “The instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless well used by trained catechists. Consequently, diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists” (GDC #234).

The Office of Worship is responsible for the implementation of the vision of the Rites of Christian initiation of Adults within the Diocese. Therefore, in 2009 the office launched a certification process specifically for ministers of initiation who are catechists for the rites of Christian initiation of adults. This document is the policy and guidelines set down by the Diocesan board for Christian initiation. This certification - and its requirements and policies - are separate and distinct from catechist certification offered by the diocesan Office of Religious Education.

Initial Requirements & Prerequisites:

- ❖ While 2-3 years of experience is recommended as prerequisite for the process, those beginning initiation ministry or with less than 2 years of experience may gain much knowledge and vision for the initiation process.
- ❖ Catechists are encouraged to have a letter of recommendation from either the pastor, the pastoral associate, director of religious education or the coordinator of initiation. A brief recommendation form is included in this policy manual (Appendix 1) or online: www.dcgary.org.
- ❖ No formal education in theology, ministry, religious studies or education is required.
- ❖ Catechists seeking certification should be fully initiated (baptized, confirmed and received first Eucharist) Catholics. Since ministry involves maturity of faith and development, it is expected the person is at least 18 years of age at the start of certification and is a fully initiated (i.e., baptized, confirmed and received first eucharist) Catholic. Any waiver of this requirement must be in writing from the pastor of the parish and submitted to the Office of Worship.

Steps Toward Becoming Certified:

- ❖ There are three steps to being certified: (1) Theological formation which develops the riches of scripture and doctrine. These can be accomplished in a few ways; (2) Specialized formation in initiation ministry to help develop skills and vision; and (3) Spiritual formation that takes the form of a retreat in initiation ministry. Total hours of formation includes 48 hours of theological formation, at least 8 hours of specialized initiation formation and at least 5 hours of a spiritual retreat on initiation for a total of at least 61 hours for formation for certification. These hours need to be recorded on the Ministry of Initiation Certification Record Form available in Appendix 2 or online: www.dcgary.org.
- ❖ The catechist has three years in which to satisfy all of the requirements for initiation. A fourth year may be granted if the catechist sends a written request for an extension to the Office of Worship. The pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or the coordinator of initiation must sign the written request.

❖ Ways to Acquire Certification:

☞ Theological Formation:

Option 1: Participation in the following Emmaus Program workshops:

- Introduction to Scripture (either Old Testament or New Testament)
- Social Justice (a topic in this area)
- The Gospels or The Letters of Paul or a particular Gospel
- Introduction to Liturgy: The Mass
- The Sacraments (a topic in one of the Sacraments)
- An elective (any topic in this area)

Option 2: A graduate or current student in the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation program within the last ten years. A transcript must be sent to the Office of Worship.

Option 3: Coursework taken within the last ten years at the undergraduate or graduate level in theology or a related field such as religious studies. A transcript must be sent to the Office of Worship.

☞ Formational Workshops:

- Overview of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Breaking Open the Word
- From Membership to Discipleship: The Mission of Christ for the Church
- The Four Pillars of Liturgical Catechesis

☞ Spiritual Retreat:

Option 1: Participation in the Office of Worship's annual initiation retreat for at least 5 hours. This would have to have been completed within the last three years.

Option 2: Participation in a program by the North American Forum on the Catechumenate within the last five years. Proof of participation will be required to fulfill the requirement.

Option 3: Participation in a retreat on initiation offered by a Catholic diocese within the last three years. Proof of participation is required.

Option 4: Participation in a retreat offered by another organization or institution that has been approved before hand by the Office of Worship. Approval to be applied to the certification should be sought prior to participation in order that it fulfills the requirement. Proof of participation is required.

☞ Safe Environment Sexual Misconduct Training:

This requirement is required already by Diocesan policy for anyone, volunteer or staff, that works with children, and this includes ministers of initiation working with anyone at risk (age, mental ability, et al). For further information on this requirement, please contact the diocesan Safe Environment and Virtus coordinator at 219.769.9292, ext. 234.

Record Keeping:

- ❖ The person that coordinates initiation for the parish (e.g., pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or the coordinator of initiation) keeps the certification records for their initiation catechists. It is the responsibility of both the coordinator and the catechist to keep records and proof of participation. A diocesan form, Requirements Check List, is available in Appendix 2 or online: www.dcgary.org

Request for Certification:

- ❖ Upon the successful completion of all of the requirements for certification, the pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or the coordinator of initiation ministry submits the following to the Office of Worship:
 - + The completed Ministry of Initiation Certification Requirements Check List signed by the pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or coordinator of initiation.
 - + The written Request for Certification Form should be included with the completed Requirements Check list signed by the responsible party listed above.

Re-certification:

- ❖ Initial certification is for a three-year period. Re-certification is the process of extending certification for a further three years.
 - ☞ 24 hours of continuing education is required for re-certification. This requirement may be satisfied in numerous ways: (1) three workshops in the Emmaus program, (2) 24 hours in workshops offered by any Catholic diocese, or (3) coursework at the undergraduate or graduate levels.

The pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or coordinator of initiation sends a written request to the Office of Worship for re-certification on behalf of the initially certified catechist.

The completed form, Re-certification Check List, is sent to the Office of Worship, and has been signed by the pastor, pastoral associate, director of religious education or coordinator of initiation. This form is available in Appendix 3 or online: www.dcgary.org.

Pastor's Recommendation Form for Initiation Ministry Certification

Diocese of Gary

***Note: After completing section A, please give this form to your pastor in order to complete section B.*

Section A To be completed by applicant.

Applicant's name: _____

Parish: _____

Number of years in initiation ministry (RCIA): _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Section B To be completed by applicant's parish pastor.

Dear Monsignor/Father,

Your parishioner is applying for certification in the ministry of initiation. This applicant is asking for your recommendation in order to complete certification and be certified. This process requires 61 hours of formation. The Office of Worship, Diocese of Gary, will not issue a certificate to an applicant without your recommendation. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Office of Worship, Diocese of Gary, 9292 Broadway, Merrillville IN 46410.

Is the applicant actively ministering in initiation, or preparing to become involved, at your parish?

Do you recommend this person for a certificate in initiation ministry?

Comments:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____



Requirements Check List

Name: _____ Parish: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____ Date File began: _____

Emmaus Program Workshops:

	Date Completed	Instructor:
1. Introduction to Scripture:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Testament	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Testament	_____	_____
2. <input type="checkbox"/> The Gospels or Letters of Paul	_____	_____
3. <input type="checkbox"/> An Elective	_____	_____
4. <input type="checkbox"/> Social Justice	_____	_____
5. <input type="checkbox"/> Liturgy: The Mass	_____	_____
6. Sacraments		
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____

Formational Workshops:

7. <input type="checkbox"/> Overview of the RCIA	_____	_____
8. <input type="checkbox"/> Breaking Open the Word	_____	_____
9. <input type="checkbox"/> Fr. Membership 2 Discipleship: The Mission of Christ for the Church	_____	_____
10. <input type="checkbox"/> The Four Pillars of Catechesis	_____	_____

Spiritual [Participation in one initiation retreat or NA Forum event/institute]:

11. <input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan retreat on Initiation	_____	_____
12. <input type="checkbox"/> Virtus: Safe Environment	_____	_____

All requirements for certification completed on: _____

Certificate is sent to Coordinator of Initiation Ministry in the parish or to the catechist (Please circle appropriate person).

A copy of the certificate is included in file.

FILE IS COMPLETE on _____ and is thus

signed by [associate] director of the Office of Worship: _____

