

## **STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL CATECHISTS (TEACHERS)**

We recognize that teachers need planned, regular, on-going, and focused development in order to increase their knowledge and skills. This is the purpose behind the 30 clock hours of professional development required for teachers by the State of Michigan.

But since the Catholic Church sees School Catechists as those who “encourage a living, explicit, and fruitful profession of faith,”<sup>1</sup> we also recognize that whether they specifically teach religion or not, all teachers in Catholic schools share the responsibility of the faith formation of their students. Therefore, the following standards have been developed in order to aid all teachers in distinguishing, cherishing, and accomplishing this incredible responsibility.

### **LEVEL I:**

1. All teachers employed by the diocesan schools will complete 10 clock hours in Theological Content each year in content-rich offerings/events/classes during the next 3 years or, for newly hired teachers, within the first 3 years of their employment. Content standards and approval criteria are provided in Appendix A.
2. Apart from the four exceptions outlined below, only hours earned after September 1, 2004 will be counted toward completion of these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content (10 hours per year for three years), unless otherwise approved by the Office of Schools.
  - a. Graduates of the Ministry Formation/Discipleship Formation program are considered to have already completed these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
  - b. Graduates of the Certificate in Youth Ministry Program are considered to have already completed these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of graduation must be furnished.
  - c. Teachers who have a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree in Catholic theology, pastoral studies, theological studies, scripture, religious education, liturgical studies, etc., are considered to have already completed the 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of an earned degree must be furnished.
  - d. Teachers who have previously achieved Basic/Level I Catechist Certification in this or another diocese are considered to have already completed the 30 necessary hours in Theological Content. Proof of achievement must be furnished.
3. All teachers (K-12) employed by the diocesan schools who are responsible for teaching religion on a daily basis will demonstrate effective teaching of religion according to the following rubric:
  - They will be able to locate and use various religious resources, including The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, and
  - They will employ appropriate grade-level methodology and content in the teaching of religion as noted through regular classroom observations.

---

<sup>1</sup> General Directory of Catechesis, #66

4. Of these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content (10 hours per year for three years), 5 hours per year will also count toward the 30 clock hours of professional development required each year for teachers by the State of Michigan.
5. In addition to these 30 necessary hours in Theological Content (10 hours per year for three years), all teachers new to diocesan schools (K - 12) will be required to participate in an introductory teacher orientation program offered by the Office of Schools within the first year of employment. This program will focus on an overview of the Church and Diocese, the significance of the Catholic identity of our schools, location of religious materials and resources, and thoughts on teaching religion and methods of incorporating religious values into all areas of the school curriculum.
6. Documentation of the above requirements is to be recorded on a log provided by the Office of Schools. This log is to be kept in the teacher's personnel file.

## **LEVEL II:**

1. Within the next 5 years, or for newly hired teachers, within the first 5 years of employment, all high school religion/theology teachers who do not have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Catholic theology, pastoral studies, theological studies, scripture, religious education, liturgical studies, or some related area, must complete the Discipleship Formation Program offered by the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, and Initiation. As fees for the Discipleship Formation Program are a shared responsibility between the individual and the sponsoring institution, high schools will need to account for this expense in their annual budget.
2. Exceptions to this requirement, based upon extreme and extenuating circumstances, can only be made by the Office of Schools.
3. All other teachers within the diocese who seek a fuller faith development program are encouraged to enroll in the Discipleship Formation Program. All schools are encouraged to commit a portion of their professional development budget to this program. Teachers who complete this program will receive Level II certification.
4. Documentation of the above requirements is to be recorded on a log provided by the Office of Schools. This log is to be kept in the teacher's personnel file.

## **ONGOING CERTIFICATION:**

1. After completion of the Level I and/or Level II School Catechist Certification Program, all teachers (K-12) will be required to complete 5 clock hours of religious study each year in Theological Content in approved content-rich offerings/events/classes provided by the school, parish, or diocese.
2. These 5 hours will also count toward the 30 clock hours of professional development required for teachers by the State of Michigan.
3. If these hours are taken in the Discipleship Formation Program, they can also count toward achieving Level II certification.

4. Documentation of the above requirements is to be recorded on a log provided by the Office of Schools. This log is to be kept in the teacher's personnel file.

### **ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS:**

1. All teachers are expected to participate in diocesan, local, and regional events that would foster their ongoing spiritual and/or faith development even if they do not count for certification hours. Staff retreats, designated times at faculty meetings or diocesan events will be provided for teachers to learn new ideas and share creative ways to teach religion.
2. All teachers of religion/theology should gather two or three times a year at their local site to discuss, plan, and evaluate the religion curriculum, methodology, prayer experiences, service programs, etc.
3. Pastors, in working with the school principal and/or DRE, are encouraged to ensure that an opportunity is provided for all faculty to partake in at least one spiritual and/or faith development opportunity each year.
4. Teachers are strongly encouraged to make use of the NCEA's *Information for Growth*, a self-assessment survey. This instrument will help individual catechists in assessing their own level of religious knowledge, their knowledge of the process of catechesis, and their attitude toward catechetical ministry. Based on these results, teachers would be able to develop a personal plan for study and growth.

### **LISTING OF OFFERINGS:**

In order to ensure that catechists have the opportunity to meet certification requirements, the diocesan Office of Schools and the Office of Evangelization, Catechesis, Initiation will jointly publish a list of approved events/offerings/classes three times a year. A listing of these events/offerings/classes will also be available on the diocesan website.