ARCHDIOCESAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

The Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis issues several levels of certification for the ministry of religious education in elementary schools, high schools, and parish school programs. The certification verifies that the person has completed certain course requirements in Catholic theology and methodology as specified below. It does not indicate the person's spiritual formation or ministerial experience, for which the local parish/school may establish its own requirements. Nor is certification the same as qualification, which is also determined at the local level.

In addition to stated certification requirements, a person hired as a religion teacher, parish catechist, CRE, or DRE should have the following qualities:

- The person is a practicing Roman Catholic and believes deeply in Jesus and His message as communicated through the Church, and wishes to witness this belief to others.
- The person is sensitive to and comfortable with the students in his/her level of catechesis.
- The person is willing to continue his/her formation through various types of enrichment programs.

**Elementary School Religion Teacher Certification**

**12 credits + state teacher certification**

Everyone who teaches religion in a parish elementary school shall be certified as a religion teacher by the Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Office.

To be certified as an elementary school religion teacher, a person must be a Catholic with a bachelor's degree and state certification as a teacher, and at least twelve credit hours in specified theology or religious education courses from a Catholic college, university, or institute. Philosophy courses are not applicable. Courses must have been taken since 1962. Only two of the required hours may be taken as audit. Two additional elective credits in theology or religious education are required to renew elementary school religion teacher certification every five years. This certification applies to elementary school teachers who are assigned the teaching of religion in addition to their other teaching responsibilities.

The twelve credit-hours shall cover the basic Church teachings and catechetical processes recommended by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *General and National Directories for Catechesis*. Paul VI Pontifical Institute offers the core curriculum as listed below. Paul VI courses completed toward previous certification standards are also accepted. Equivalent coursework from another accredited Catholic college/university/institute or from another diocese will be reviewed by the Religious Education Department, which grants Archdiocesan certification.

**ST 101  CATECHISM I: BASIC CATHOLIC DOCTRINE**—two credit hours

A study of the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic faith as outlined in the creed and described in part one of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**LT 101  CATECHISM II: CATHOLIC SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL THEOLOGY**—two credit hours

A study of the theology of the seven sacraments as revealed by their origin, development, and liturgical celebration as described in part two of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**MT 101  CATECHISM III: FOUNDATIONS OF CATHOLIC MORALITY**—two credit hours

A study of the foundational principles of moral theology and the fundamental moral teachings of the Catholic Church as described in part three of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**SS 101  INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCRIPTURE**—two credit hours

A general survey of the Old and New Testament scriptures from a literary, historical and theological perspective, and an introduction to basic principles of Catholic scriptural interpretation
MT/LT/SP  MORAL THEOLOGY, LITURGY, or SPIRITUALITY [ELECTIVE]—two credit hours
(e.g., Catholic Prayer and Spirituality, Social Teachings of the Church, Catholic Sexual Morality, Liturgies with Children, The Liturgical Year, Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, Spirituality of the Sacred Heart, Virtue Based Restorative Discipline)

RE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CATECHETICS)—two credit hours
(Basic methods, e.g., Creativity in Catechesis, Teaching Religion to Children, Dynamic and Effective Catechesis; One of these basic courses is required.)

Elementary PSR Catechist Certification
12 credits

Everyone who directs/coordinates a parish religious education program or who teaches religion in a parish school of religion should be certified by the Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Office.

To be certified as a PSR catechist, a person must be a Catholic with 12 credit hours in specified theology or religious education courses from a Catholic college, university, or institute. (See theology and catechetics requirements listed above for Elementary School Religion Teacher Certification.) A bachelor's degree or state teaching certification is not required. Courses must have been taken since 1962. Only two of the required hours may be taken as audit. Two additional elective credits in theology or religious education are required to renew catechist certification every five years.

Non-Catholic Recognition of Credits
12 credits

Non-Catholic teachers in Catholic elementary and secondary schools are not permitted to teach religion, but are expected to support the philosophy and values of the school. Therefore, schools may require them to take the same courses in theology that are required for religion teacher certification. Upon completion of the requirements, non-Catholics are not issued a religion teacher certification but do receive a certificate recognizing the coursework they took to inform themselves about Catholic teaching in order to better support the religious dimension of the school. (See requirements for Elementary School Religion Teacher Certification.)

Elementary Religious Education Specialist Certification
24 credits (+ state teacher certification or 6 general education credits)

For someone employed to teach in an elementary school as a full-time or half-time religious education specialist, advanced certification is required beyond the basic twelve credits required for introductory religion teacher certification. To be certified as an elementary religious education specialist, a person must be a Catholic with a bachelor’s degree and twenty-four credit hours in specified theology or religious education courses from a Catholic college, university, or institute. Courses must have been taken since 1962 for credit, not audit. The required credits shall cover the basic Church teachings and catechetical processes recommended by the General Directory for Catechesis and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as listed below. If the person does not have state teaching certification, at least six additional general education credits are required in addition to theology and religious education credits listed below.

ST SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(Catechism I – ST 101 Catholic Belief Today (required), plus 2 credits: e.g., Christology, Mariology, Church, Catholic Apologetics, Church History)

MT MORAL THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(Catechism III—MT 101 Foundations of Morality (required), plus 2 credits: e.g., Social Teachings of the Church, Catholic Sexual Morality, Medical Moral Issues, and Virtue Based Restorative Discipline)

SS  SACRED SCRIPTURE -- four credit hours
(SS 101 Introduction to Sacred Scripture I (required), plus 2 credits: e.g., Old Testament, New Testament, Synoptic Gospels, St. John’s Gospel, Epistles of Paul, Psalms)

LT/SP  LITURGY and SPIRITUALITY -- four credit hours (two-credits each)
(Catechism II—LT101 Catholic Sacramental and Liturgical Theology (required), plus 2 credits in Spirituality: e.g., Introduction to Catholic Prayer and Spirituality, Spiritual Formation, Discerning God’s Will, Forming Catholic Hearts and Minds, The Bible and Prayer)

RE  RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CATECHETICS) -- four credit hours
(Two credits are required in basic RE: e.g., Creativity in Catechetics, Teaching Religion to Children, Dynamic and Effective Catechesis, plus two credits in an additional basic RE course or an elective RE course, e.g., Teaching Religion to Junior High, Adolescent Catechesis, Religious Education for Children with Special Needs, Religious Education Methods and Media, Theology of the Media)

ELECTIVES -- four credit hours
(e.g., these may include additional credit hours in any of the above areas or a specialized course such as particular key Church documents, a particular saint, Ecumenism, Administration of Religious Education Programs) Philosophy courses do not apply.

ED TEACHING AND LEARNING -- six credit hours (if no state teacher certification)
(e.g., General Education Methods, Elementary Education Methods, Educational Psychology or other courses which focus on instructional techniques, learning processes, classroom management, special learning needs, etc. School law or history of education courses are not applicable. General education courses may be taken at any community college, state university, or Catholic college or university.)

Secondary School Religion Teacher Certification
B.A or M.A. in Theology or Religious Education
[OR]
B.A. in another area & 30 credits in theology and catechetics & (state teaching certificate or 6 credits in general education)

All teachers of religion in a Catholic high school must meet the certification standards established by the Catholic Education Office.

To be certified as a secondary teacher of religion, full-time or part-time, a person must be a Catholic, hold a bachelor’s degree in theology or religious education, or the equivalent, and have the specified credits in catechetics and education. A person holding state teaching certification whose degree is in another field may work toward religious education certification by taking 30 hours, as specified below, from a Catholic college, university, or pontifical institute such as Paul VI. Courses must have been taken since 1962 for credit, not audit. If the person does not hold state teacher certification, then 6 credits in general education methods are also required.

The 30 hours shall cover the basic Church teachings and catechetical processes recommended by the General Directory for Catechesis and the National Directory for Catechesis, including the following:

ST  SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(Catholic Belief Today or Basic Catholic Doctrine (required), plus 2 credits: e.g., Christology, Mariology, Church, Catholic Apologetics, or Church History)

MT  MORAL THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(Foundations of Catholic Morality (required), plus 2 credits: e.g.: Social Teachings of the Church, Contemporary Moral Issues, Catholic Sexual Morality, Medical Moral Issues, Virtue Based Restorative Discipline)
SS SACRED SCRIPTURE -- four credit hours
(e.g., Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, Synoptic Gospels, St. John’s Gospel, Epistles of Paul, Wisdom Literature, Psalms)

RE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CATECHETICS) -- four credit hours
(Teaching Religion to Children, Dynamic and Effective Catechetics, Creativity in Catechesis (one of these basic courses is required), plus 2 additional credits in RE: e.g.: Introduction to Catechetics, Theology of Catechesis, Adolescent Catechesis, Faith Development of the Adolescent, Teaching Religion to High School Students, Religious Education for Students with Special Needs, Theology of the Media)

ELECTIVES -- fourteen credit hours
(Additional theology or religious education courses; philosophy courses do not apply)

ED TEACHING AND LEARNING -- six credit hours (if no state teacher certification)
(e.g., General Education Methods, Secondary Education Methods, Educational Psychology Adolescent Psychology or other courses which focus on instructional techniques, learning processes, classroom management, special learning needs, etc. Courses such as school law or the history of education do not apply. These credit hours are in addition to the 30 required credit hours in theology and religious education (catechetics). These general education courses may be taken at any community college, state university, or Catholic college or university.)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR CERTIFICATIONS

Elementary School Religion Coordinator
24 credits including a course in Administration of Religious Education Programs + state teacher certification

To coordinate the religion program in a Catholic elementary school, a person must be a Catholic with a bachelor’s degree, state teacher certification, and the 24 required credits for Elementary Religious Education Specialist certification, including a course in Administration of Religious Education Programs or the equivalent.

High School Religion Department Chair
M.A. in Religious Education or Theology plus RE and Teaching/Learning requirements as for high school religion teacher

To coordinate the religion program in a Catholic high school, a person must be a Catholic with a master’s degree in religious education or theology, and meet the standards for high school religion teacher.

Elementary PSR Coordinator Certification
24 credits including a course in Administration of Religious Education Programs (+ B.A. degree or 6 additional credits in catechetics or general education and 6 additional credits in theology)

To coordinate the elementary Parish School of Religion, a person must have fulfilled the 24 required credits for Elementary Religion Specialist certification, including a course in Administration of Religious Education Programs or the equivalent. If the person does not have a bachelor's degree, six additional credits in theology, as well as six additional credits in religious education or general education methods for teaching and learning would be required.
High School PSR Coordinator Certification
24 credits, including a course in Administration of Religious Education Programs (+ Bachelor’s degree or 6 additional credits in theology + 6 additional credits in youth ministry, religious education or general education methods for teaching and learning)

The same requirements apply as for elementary PSR coordinators, except religious education methodology should include Teaching Religion the High School Students or Adolescent Catechesis. If the person does not have a bachelor's degree, six additional credits in theology (electives), as well as six additional credits in youth ministry, religious education or general education methods for teaching and learning would be required.

Adult Religious Education Coordinator Certification
24 credits (+ bachelor’s degree or 6 additional credits in theology & 6 additional credits in administration of religious education programs, general education theory and practice, communication, group processes or leadership skills)

To coordinate the program for adult religious education and faith formation in a parish, the person must have completed 24 credits in the following six areas:

**ST**  SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(e.g., Basic Catholic Doctrine, Christology, Church, Mariology, Trinity)

**MT**  MORAL THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(e.g., Foundations of Catholic Morality, Contemporary Moral Issues, Social Teachings of the Church, Catholic Sexual Morality, Medical Moral Issues, Forming Catholic Minds and Hearts)

**SS**  SACRED SCRIPTURE -- four credit hours
(e.g., Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, Synoptic Gospels, St. John’s Gospel, Epistles of Paul, Psalms, Wisdom Literature)

**LT**  LITURGICAL THEOLOGY -- four credit hours
(e.g., Catholic Sacramental and Liturgical Theology, The Liturgical Year, Grief, Anointing, and Catholic Funeral Rites)

**SP**  SPIRITUALITY/MINISTRY—four credits
(e.g., Foundations of Spirituality, Spirituality of the New Testament, the Many Faces of Prayer, Spiritual Formation-Beatitudes and Eucharist, and Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi)

**RE**  RELIGIOUS EDUCATION -- four credit hours
(Methodologies in adult religious education/faith formation and/or the Catechumenate)

If the person does not have a bachelor’s degree, 6 additional credits (electives) in theology, as well as 6 additional credits in administration of religious education programs, general education theory and practice, communication, group processes or leadership skills would be required.

Initial-level Director of Religious Education Certification
36 credits (24 credits in theology + 12 credits in RE methods + bachelor’s degree or 6 additional credits in RE methods + state teaching certificate or 6 additional general education credits)

To direct the total religious education programs in a parish, a person must have a bachelor’s degree and have completed a total of 36 credits, as follows. If the person does not have state teaching certification, at least 6 additional general education credits are required.

**ST**  SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY -- six credit hours
(Catholic Belief Today or Basic Catholic Doctrine (required), plus 4 credits: e.g., Christology, Mariology, Church, Catholic Apologetics, and Church History)

**MT**  MORAL THEOLOGY -- six credit hours
(Foundations of Catholic Morality (required), plus 4 credits: e.g., Social Teachings of the Church, Education in Human Sexuality and Life Issues, Catholic Sexual Morality, Medical Moral Issues, Virtue Based Restorative Discipline)

**SS  SACRED SCRIPTURE -- six credit hours**
(e.g.: Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, Synoptic Gospels, St. John’s Gospel, Epistles of Paul, Psalms, Wisdom Literature)

**LT  LITURGICAL THEOLOGY -- four credit hours**
(e.g., Catholic Sacramental and Liturgical Theology, Saints and Seasons of the Liturgical Year, Liturgies with Children, Theology of Funeral and Burial Liturgies)

**SP  SPIRITUALITY/MINISTRY—four credits**
(e.g., Introduction to Catholic Prayer and Spirituality, Spirituality of the New Testament, The Many Faces of Prayer, Spiritual Formation-Beatitudes and Eucharist, The Spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi)

**RE  RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CATECHETICS)—twelve hours**

- Methods of Teaching Religion to Children --4 credit hours
  Two credits are required in basic RE, e.g., Creativity in Catechesis, Teaching Religion to Children, or Dynamic and Effective Catechesis plus two credits in an additional basic RE course or an elective RE course, i.e.: Religious Education for Children with Special Needs, or Theology of the Media.)

- Methods of Teaching Religion to Adolescents-- 2 credit hours

- Methods for Adult Rel. Ed. and Catechumenate --4 credit hours

- Methods for Religious Education Administration-- 2 credit hours

**ED TEACHING AND LEARNING -- six credit hours (if no state teacher certification)**
(e.g., General Education Methods, Elementary Education Methods, Educational Psychology or other courses which focus on instructional techniques, learning processes, classroom management, special learning needs, etc. Courses such as school law or the history of education do not apply. These general education courses may be taken at any community college, state university, or Catholic college or university.)

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**Master-level Director of Religious Education Certification**

**M.A. Religious Education or Theology**

To be certified as a Master-level DRE, a person must have earned a master's degree in religious education from a Catholic college or university. If the person's degree is in theology or pastoral studies, background in education is also required, such as a B.A. in education and/or the methodology courses in educational and catechetical theory, practice, and administration that are required for initial level DRE certification.

**Enrichment beyond Certification**

After a coordinator or director of religious education is certified in the Archdiocese, continued efforts to grow in faith, knowledge, and skills are needed to better share faith with children and adults. Such on-going learning can come through such opportunities as Religious Education Institutes, lectures, Archdiocesan CRE/DRE Professional Days, and study groups, as well as through formal course work.

**Recognition of Coursework**
Courses from an accredited Catholic college/university/institute will be reviewed by the Religious Education Department, which grants Archdiocesan certification. Courses for certification are available online and at many centers throughout the archdiocese through Paul VI Institute. Schedules of courses and registration forms are available from Paul VI Institute located at 20 Archbishop May Drive, St. Louis, MO 63119 (314.792.7450) or website http://www.archstl.org/paul6.

A catechist certificate from another diocese does not automatically grant certification in the Archdiocese, but equivalent hours from workshops/courses in a diocesan certification program may be applicable and will be reviewed on an individual basis. In-service and catechist training arranged locally by a DRE/CRE for a given parish or region is not recognized for certification although it is certainly encouraged for ongoing staff development.

**Application for Certification**

Application for certification is made to the Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Center, 4445 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63108. Verification of credits and degrees, through transcripts and/or report cards, must be supplied unless already on file in the Personnel Office.

*Please note that Archdiocesan Religious Education Certification is issued by the Catholic Education Center, and not by Paul VI Institute which grants its own certificates. While the Catholic Education Center recognizes courses from Paul VI Institute toward certification, it also reviews and recognizes courses taken from other Catholic colleges and universities as applicable toward certification. *

A religious education certificate for the appropriate level will be mailed to the applicant from the Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Center when all the requirements have been completed and verified.

For further information on any of the various levels of certification, or to apply for certification, contact Dr. Barbara Blackburn, Archdiocesan Director of Religious Education Formation at 314.792.7373 or Blackburn@archstl.org.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Which Archdiocesan agency is responsible for establishing criteria for certification and issuing Religious Education certification?**

  The Religious Education Department of the Catholic Education Office establishes criteria for certification and issues certifications. Your file will be kept in the Religious Education Department. As applicable, files will be shared with the School Personnel Office.

- **Where can I take courses for certification?**

  Courses may be taken through an accredited Catholic college/university/institute. Paul VI Pontifical Institute of Catechetical and Pastoral Studies is a resource offered to religious educators, catechists, and parishes of the Archdiocese, providing the core theological and catechetical courses required for certification. These courses are offered online and in classroom settings around the Archdiocese. The trimester schedule of courses and registration is available at www.archstl.org/paul6. Paul VI Institute offers courses but does not establish criteria for certification nor issue certification for religious education. If there is a question about a particular course fulfilling a religious education certification requirement, contact Dr. Barbara Blackburn, Archdiocesan Director of Religious Education Formation, at 314.792.7373 or Blackburn@archstl.org.

- **For how long will my certification remain valid?**

  Basic 12-hour certifications as teacher or catechist are valid for five years. A 2-credit (not audit) course is then required for update. Upon completion of the 2-credit update, forward the transcript to the Religious Education Department where your update will be recorded. Advanced certifications do not expire, but all religion teachers, catechists, and administrators of religious education programs are expected to continue...
their professional development and remain current on church teachings and religious education methodologies.