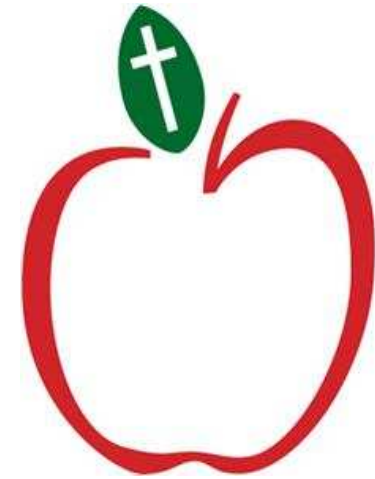


Handing on the Faith



Catholic Schools

**Religion Formation for Catholic
School Teachers**

The Teacher In A Catholic School

“Behold! A sower went out to sow. As he sowed some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil; and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns which grew up and choked it. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing, and yielding thirty fold, sixty fold and a hundred fold.” (Mk 4:3-8)

All Catholic School Ministers are Sowers of the Seed of Faith! How will you plant your seeds amongst the children and parents within your community?

Catholic School Ministers (Administration, Faculty and Staff) are persons who have:

- * a strong, personal relationship with God
- * the proper spiritual, academic and psychological training for teaching.
- * the experience to be able to exert a positive influence on the entire religious value system of the school.
- * an understanding of the particular role of Catholic Schools in fostering mature faith in the entire school community,
- * an understanding that faith is a gift and once accepted, must be nourished in the process of life-long learning,
- * an understanding of each child entrusted to his/her care,

Support of Religion Teachers

To recognize and affirm the important responsibilities of the Religion Teacher, schools should provide the following support:

- * A Religion Coordinator that will work with the Religion Teacher.
- * Adequate formation guidance, facilities, budget, resources, library and media equipment.
- * Financial support to participate in formation for catechist certification and continuing enrichment as Religion Teacher.
- * Encouragement and assistance in implementing the Religion Teacher Certification Directives.
- * Public recognition and affirmation by the school community of the important responsibilities held by the Religion Teacher.

WEBSITE

The interactive Religious Certification Form can be found on the OCS website at:

<http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ocs/TeacherLC.htm>

Submit to Francine Conway by June 1st.



REVISED 07/2009

- * a strong desire to help each and every one in the community deepen their own spirituality.
- * The opportunity to model the life of Jesus Christ in all they do.

“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole world”

Ministerial Retreat For Faculty/Staff

As ministers in the Catholic School it is part of our role to develop a community of faith among each other. To accomplish this task, every faculty member needs to come together to recognize each person’s role in the Catholic School and to set goals to build a stronger community of Faith among themselves, the children and parents.

This retreat is the first step of the year to recognize our purpose as a Catholic School and to set goals for the year in the area of Catholic Identity.

Ministerial Prayer

As ministers in the Catholic School, prayer with each other supports the total Mission of the Catholic School. Preparing prayer for each other provides an opportunity for all faculty members to share their faith with others and to enable all to experience an ecumenical environment.

Religion Teacher Certification

Religion Teacher Certification is the official recognition by the Diocese of Richmond through the Office of Catholic Schools that a person has participated in a minimum amount of approved formational experiences every year to enhance one's knowledge and skills as a Religion Teacher.

Personal Qualities of Religion Teachers

Catholic school religion teachers must:

- * **Be committed members** of the Catholic Church who understand their ministry as a form of participation in the Church's teaching mission.
- * **Be witnesses to Christian living**, in both personal and professional life, by having developed a Christian value system that is exemplified in one's daily life.
- * **Perceive and actualize** the need for continual personal, professional and spiritual growth, nurturing the gift of faith through specific programs, retreats and adult education.
- * **Be active role models** in the Catholic Church today. (Participants in parish life, prayer and worship)
- * **Be able to understand and articulate** the model of Church as servant community, striving to bring about peace & justice through service.
- * **Have the appropriate educational and professional** background, as well as an awareness of and commitment to the particular stated religious goals of the school.
- * **Be committed to preparing effective lessons** as well as participating in regular in-service sessions.

Each teacher can best assess their needs by the results of the **IFG Survey**

Formation experiences from workshops or in-service experiences offered by offices of the Diocese, parishes, or schools should receive prior approval from the Religion Coordinator.

These programs must meet the following criteria:

- * Conducted by a qualified person with current knowledge and experience in Theology and/or Catechesis.
- * Relate to the topics in the IFG Survey, Learning Strands and Personal Spiritual Development.
- * Conducted in accord with the principles and guidelines presented in the **National Catechetical Directory**.
- * Provide opportunity for personal interaction between and among leader and other participants.
- * Regional or National Institutes, Congresses or Workshops related to catechetical ministry - The actual number of hours will be determined by the Religion Coordinator.
- * Academic credits can be earned from Catholic Colleges or Universities; online courses from University of Dayton or Notre Dame.

Religion formation is the actual study and discussion of the topic and not regular organizational, lesson planning sessions, or school liturgical experiences.

Certificates from other Dioceses

Certificates from other Dioceses will be evaluated on an individual basis in accord with criteria as described within our Certification Handbook. The certificate should be submitted to OCS as well as the criteria for that program.

Certification Process

Religion certification is an **integral part** of the VCEA/SACS Accreditation Process. The following steps must be followed for certification:

- * All newly hired Religion Teachers must complete ***Pathways 2009, Modules 1 and 2.***
- * Additional modules from the ***Pathways 2009*** program may be completed for Religion formation hours.
- * All Religion Certification Certificates should be posted in the appropriate classroom.
- * During self-study years for Accreditation, all Religion Teachers are required to take the National Catholic Educational survey called “Information For Growth”. When the results of the survey are completed, the religion teacher is asked to complete the five-year planning for Religion Formation and submit it to the Religion Coordinator and the Steering Committee for the Self Study so all Religion Teachers’ plans are included in Section A, Faith Community.
- * Those seeking Intermediate, Advanced, Master, or Professional levels of certification are to complete the formation form provided by the Office of Catholic Schools and have the form signed by the Religion Coordinator.
- * The formation form must be sent to the Office of Catholic Schools by **June 1st** of each academic year. **The 10 hours of formation must be obtained within the academic year prior to June 1st.**
- * The Office of Catholic Schools will review each religion teacher's formation and forward to the Principal notice of renewal and new certificates.

Approved Catechetical Formation

The hours or academic credits necessary for certification as a Religion Teacher can be acquired in a variety of ways.

- * **Be able to deal with conflict** and disagreement in a sensitive and understanding manner.
- * **Have respect for the dignity and worth** of each child, expressed in flexibility of educational approaches, sensitivity to uniqueness, and ability to discern and build on individual strengths.
- * **Be able to elicit** from students a faith response and call them to an active Christian life.



AREAS OF FORMATION

Religion Teachers should receive a balanced formation in each of the following areas of formation:

Religion Teacher as Person:

Includes knowledge of Scripture, growth in prayer, communication/listening skills.

Methods of Teaching Religion:

Include learning climate, alternative strategies and critical thinking skills.

Theology Knowledge:

Includes knowledge of Scripture/Church/Liturgy
Prayer/Sacraments/Morality/Peace &
Justice/Faith/Mission/Evangelization/Stewardship

Levels of Certification

Certification is granted by the Office of Catholic Schools.

Preliminary Level (1st Year Religion Teacher)

The first year of teaching Religion, the Principal assigns this level to the teacher. The list of Preliminary religion teachers is to be sent to OCS by **September 15th** of each school year. The Religion Coordinator will assist the teacher with the needed formation.

EXPECTATION: Completion of *Pathways 2009, Modules 1 and 2* and an additional **seven (7)** hours of approved Religion Formation. Please check with the Religion Coordinator to make sure that the formation is appropriate for certification.

Intermediate Level (Two Years)

Upon the completion of a teacher's first year, the Religion Coordinator will assist the teacher to complete the request for certification.

EXPECTATION: Completion of **ten (10)** hours yearly of approved Religion Formation. Please check with the Religion Coordinator to make sure that the formation is appropriate for certification.

Advanced Level (Three Years)

Upon the completion of the third year of teaching, the Religion Coordinator will complete the request for Advanced level of certification.

EXPECTATION: Completion of **ten (10)** hours yearly of approved Religion Formation. Please check with the Religion Coordinator to make sure that the formation is appropriate for certification

Master Level (Five Years)

The Master Level is the highest level in the Diocesan Certification Program for those who do not possess a Theology Degree. The Religion Coordinator will request this level for the teacher after three years of the Advanced level and all approved formation hours.

EXPECTATION: Completion of **ten (10)** hours yearly of approved Religion Formation. Please check with the Religion Coordinator to make sure that the formation is appropriate for certification.

Professional Level (Five Years)

Teachers with a theology degree are given the Professional Level. A copy of the degree or transcript should accompany the request for this level.

EXPECTATION: Completion of **ten (10)** hours yearly of approved Religion Formation. Please check with the Religion Coordinator to make sure that the formation is appropriate for certification.