

Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute Catechetical Certification for Parish Catechetical Leaders in the Diocese of Madison



What is the Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute?

The Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute (SOWDI) is a program of adult faith formation and catechetical certification in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Madison. It offers a comprehensive and systematic formation based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and aims to draw its participants into deeper communion with Jesus Christ, strengthening them to be more effective witnesses and teachers of the Gospel. The Seat of Wisdom Certification is offered in cooperation by the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis and the Office of Catholic Schools.

Who is the Seat of Wisdom?

“Seat of Wisdom” is one of the titles of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom, took flesh from her womb and as an infant rested in her arms. In pondering her divine Son Jesus Christ, Mary “*became the model of all those who hear the word of God and keep it (cf. Lk 11:28), and merited the title ‘Seat of Wisdom’*” (John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, 120).



Why is Certification important?

Catechetical formation for Administrators, parish staff members and Catholic School teachers has been a long time expectation in the Diocese of Madison. In order to properly give Catechetical formation to their students, “Professional Catechists” ought to be receiving personal and professional formation. The General Directory for Catechesis states, “...Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists...Therefore, it is necessary to plan for and participate in formation that assists a teacher/catechist

“to mature as a person, believer and as an apostle.” GDC 234, 238. Finally, in 2008 Bishop Morlino along with the rest of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference reiterated the necessity for all professional lay catechists to seek and maintain certification in order to maintain their employment.

Who must seek Certification?

The Institute is for all adults seeking to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic faith. In addition to offering general certificates for adult formation, the institute also offers certification for parish catechists, Catholic school principals and teachers, directors and coordinators of religious education, youth ministers, and all those involved in any form of adult religious education. Other personnel serving in parish leadership positions are encouraged to register and attend as well.

What are the different levels of Certification?

There are three levels of study: *Core Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Advanced Certification*. Those parish catechetical leaders, principals and teachers who instruct religion directly are expected to complete Advanced Certification followed by yearly renewal. Those who teach in Catholic Schools but are not responsible for Religion instruction are expected to seek Core Basic Certification with yearly renewal. Each of these levels includes coursework covering four categories of study at each level: Sacred Scripture, Doctrine, Christian Spirituality, and Methods. The *Core Basic* Certification is 50 hours of Coursework to be completed in in 3 consecutive years (12-18 hours each contract/fiscal year).

The *Core Basic Curriculum* is 8 courses based on the Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Courses required for the Core Basic Curriculum include:

- CAT 103 Sacred Scripture 1-4 & The Catechism of the Catholic Church(6 hrs)
- CAT 101e Sacred Scripture 5-12 (8 hrs)
- CAT 107 The Creed: What Catholics Believe (6 hrs)
- CAT 109 Sacraments: Celebration of the Christian Mystery (6 hrs)
- CAT 111 Life in Christ: Christian Morality (6 hrs)
- CAT 115 Christian Prayer (6 hrs)
- CAT 117 Evangelization (6 hrs)
- CAT 119 Catechesis (6hrs)

Intermediate certification is 24 hours, which is to be completed in 2 consecutive years.

Advanced certification is 36 hours, which is to be completed in 3 consecutive years. There are 3 required courses to be completed at some time during the Intermediate and/or Advanced phase.

Courses required to complete advanced certification will include:

- CAT 273 A Study of Theology of the Body (6hrs)

If an individual began certification prior to the 2015-16 school year and completed “the Gift” video they are exempt from the CAT 273 requirement.

Renewal of certification is expected of all those seeking certification. Renewal to maintain certification is **12 hours** each contract/fiscal year. Those who do not complete the Core Basic, Advanced or renewal hours will receive notification from the Diocesan Offices and will not be in compliance with Diocesan expectations.

How do I begin the Certification Process?

Each catechist is responsible to maintain and register for coursework on their own. First, he/she must create an account on the Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Data Hub (located on the Seat of Wisdom page on the Diocesan Website). Second, they must fill out all of the personal, pertinent contact information (including date of hire). Next, they must begin registering for the courses listed above in the Core Basic Certification. If assistance is needed with an account/password or help registering, the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis can be contacted at 608-821-3160.

How are Certification records maintained?

Certification records are maintained in 2 ways. First, all courses are kept on file in the Diocesan Data Hub

located on the Diocesan website. It can be accessed by accessing to the Seat of Wisdom page and clicking on the “*Register for available Courses*” bar. Each individual will also be given a SOWDI Binder to keep track of handouts, tracking sheets and course credit forms (given at the completion of the each class). Participants are expected to keep a paper copy of all the coursework attended for verification purposes. The Diocesan office will also maintain attendance and verification through sign in sheets at each class. It is important at this time to be certain that participants sign in and receive credit forms in the event that the online system does not reflect attendance. Online accounts are not deleted from the system when a teacher leaves employment at a school. Each individual account is maintained in the datasystem.

Can I get Seat of Wisdom Credit for other study & work?

Personal study and other professional and faith centered events may qualify for SOWDI intermediate and advanced credit. We have a list of approved materials on the Seat of Wisdom page on the Diocesan website. It is also permitted to request credit for an event/study. All events and studies are subject to Diocesan Approval. To request approval please fill out the Application for Course Approval form found on the left side of the SOWDI page on the Diocesan website. It can be emailed or mailed to the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis.

Are deadlines extended?

Deadlines may be extended for extenuating circumstances. Circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis. Contact the OEC for more information.

How do I receive a certificate?

Individuals seeking certification will not automatically receive a paper certificate upon the completion of classes. Each participant must send a copy of appropriate tracking forms, along with the Participant ID/request for Certification form to receive a certificate. Any Copies of course credit forms must be included if they are not yet posted in the online datasystem. Courses that are already present in the datasystem do not need to be resubmitted.

Office of Evangelization & Catechesis
Diocese of Madison
702 S. High Point Rd. Madison, WI 53719
608-821-3160 oec@straphael.org

