

# Seat of Wisdom Diocesan Institute Catechetical Certification for *Catholic School Personnel* 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, because the Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom, took flesh from her womb and as an infant rested in her arms. In the pondering of 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 certification: *Core Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Advanced*. 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. *Core Basic Certification* requires 38 hours of coursework to be completed over 3 consecutive years (at least 12 hours each contract/fiscal year). The Core Basic Curriculum for Catholic School Personnel is 6 courses based on Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The courses required

to complete Core Basic Certification for Catholic school personnel are:

- CAT 103 – Introduction to Sacred Scripture 1-4 and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (6 hrs)
- CAT 101d -- Sacred Scripture 5-12: Timeline(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)

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

*Advanced Certification* is 36 additional hours, which is to be completed in the 3 consecutive years following Intermediate Certification, for a total of 60 hours for Intermediate and Advanced combined. There are 3 required courses to be completed at some time during the Intermediate/Advanced phase. Courses required to complete Advanced Certification are:

- CAT 117b -- Evangelization (6 hrs)
- CAT 119b -- Catechesis (6hrs)
- CAT 273 -- A Study of Theology of the Body (6hrs)

(Note that Catholic school teachers do NOT take CAT 117a nor CAT 119a during any phase.)

*Renewal of certification* is expected of all who have achieved Advanced certification. Renewal to maintain certification is 12 hours each contract/fiscal year. **Those who do not complete at least 12 Core Basic, Advanced, or Renewal hours each contract/fiscal year will not be in compliance with their teaching contracts.**

### **How do I begin the Certification process?**

Each catechist registers for coursework on their own. Go to [madisondiocese.org](http://madisondiocese.org) and click on the Seat of Wisdom icon. Create an account on the Diocesan Data Hub, including all personal contact information and date of hire. Then begin registering for the courses listed in the Core Basic curriculum. Contact the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis at 608-821-3160 if you have any questions or encounter any difficulties creating an account or registering for coursework.

### **How are Certification records maintained?**

The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis verifies attendance by a sign-in sheet at each class. Attendance is documented in the Diocesan Data Hub, accessible from the Seat of Wisdom icon at [madisondiocese.org](http://madisondiocese.org). Each individual is also given a course credit form at the completion of each class. It is important that participants be certain to sign in and receive a credit

form at each class. A SOWDI binder is provided to each participant for maintaining tracking sheets and retaining course credit forms. In the event of a discrepancy with the Diocesan Data Hub, participants are expected to provide paper documentation of coursework completed. If a teacher leaves employment at a school, their online account remains in the system.

### **Can I get Seat of Wisdom credit for other study or work?**

Personal study and other professional and faith-centered events may qualify for SOWDI Intermediate/Advanced credit. All events and studies are subject to Diocesan approval. To request approval, complete the Application for Course Approval available on the SOWDI page of the Diocesan website at [madisondiocese.org](http://madisondiocese.org). The form can be emailed or mailed to the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis.

### **Are deadlines ever extended?**

Deadlines may occasionally be extended for extenuating circumstances. Circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis for more information.

### **How do I receive a certificate?**

Individuals who have completed the requirements for a level of certification will receive a paper certificate as soon as possible after verification of their coursework as indicated in the Diocesan Data Hub. If a participant believes the Diocesan Data Hub does not accurately reflect coursework completed, they should contact the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis, and be prepared to provide paper documentation for courses completed.

*Updated August 2017*

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