

# STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS IN CATHOLIC PARISHES AND SCHOOLS



**WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**

106 E. Doty Street, Suite 300, Madison, WI 53703

The 2023 *Standards for Educators in Catholic Parishes and Schools* are based on standards first published by the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) in 1975, and have developed through a periodic review process sponsored by the WCC in conjunction with Catholic education leaders across the State of Wisconsin. Prior revisions to the standards were published in 1987, 2000, and 2008.

**Wisconsin Catholic Conference** © 2023, Second Edition

106 E. Doty St., Suite 300

Madison, WI 53703

Phone: 608-257-0004

Fax: 608-257-0376

[www.wisconsincatholic.org](http://www.wisconsincatholic.org)

[office@wisconsincatholic.org](mailto:office@wisconsincatholic.org)

This material has been approved by the Wisconsin Catholic Conference Board of Directors.

The Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKI  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

The Most Reverend Donald J. Hying  
Bishop of Madison

The Most Reverend David L. Ricken  
Bishop of Green Bay

The Most Reverend James P. Powers  
Bishop of Superior

The Most Reverend William P. Callahan  
Bishop of La Crosse

### **Acknowledgement**

This publication was developed by diocesan leaders in schools, religious education, and adult faith formation representing all the dioceses within the Province of Milwaukee in the State of Wisconsin.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Gary Pokorny, Sue Nelson,  
John Soper, Bruce Varick

Diocese of Green Bay  
Todd Blahnik, Maximus Cabey,  
Liz Goldman

Diocese of Superior  
Peggy Schoenfuss

Diocese of Madison  
Michael Lancaster,  
Michelle Nilsson

Diocese of La Crosse  
Ann Lankford,  
Tom Reichenbacher

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference and its staff are grateful to these individuals for their time and effort, without whom, this work would not have come to fruition.

The following standards have been compiled with reference to the *National Directory for Catechesis*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005), and *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005).

June 2023

# **STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS IN CATHOLIC PARISHES AND SCHOOLS**

Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Diocese of Madison, Diocese of  
Green Bay, Diocese of La Crosse, and Diocese of Superior

## **PREAMBLE**

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

By virtue of baptism, Catholics are incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, becoming children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ the Son, and temples of the Holy Spirit. Enjoying this participation in the life and mind of Christ through the gift of sanctifying grace, they are called to grow in faith, hope and charity through the frequent reception of the sacraments, daily prayer, generosity of life and ongoing intellectual formation, putting on the mind of Christ (Rom. 15:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 1:27, 2:5, 4:7).

The joy experienced in this discipleship naturally inclines and charges the faithful, as members of God’s family, to continue the mission of Christ the Redeemer through evangelization and catechesis. Guided by the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 16:13), the Church and her members never cease proclaiming the Word of God (Jn. 1:14), as transmitted in its entirety by Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, and authentically interpreted, preserved, and expounded through “the living teaching office” of her Magisterium (CCC, 80 - 85).

In fidelity to this mission of evangelization, it is the goal of the dioceses of the Province of Milwaukee in the State of Wisconsin to promote and support a comprehensive Catholic educational and formational ministry. This ministry extends to people of all ages: adults, youth, and children.

Following a long tradition of service to the people of Wisconsin, Catholic schools, religious education, and adult faith formation programs continue to be an essential part of the Catholic educational and formational ministry of the Church.

By virtue of their ministry, personnel in Catholic education are role models for adults, youth, and children. Therefore, they are called to be well informed in Catholic teaching, dedicated to ongoing formation, and committed to a Catholic way of life and witness.

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) establishes the following standards for personnel called to serve as Catholic educators. These standards apply to all who have responsibility for Catholic education. A diocese in Wisconsin will recognize and accept the level of certification achieved by an educator in any other diocese in the State of Wisconsin.

The purpose of the standards is to promote and support a high quality of Catholic education in the State of Wisconsin.

## BACKGROUND FOR STANDARDS

In the early 1970s, the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) formed the Christian Education Commission (CEC). The purpose of this commission was to assist the five dioceses in Wisconsin to plan for total Christian education. In March 1975, after two years of study and a statewide survey, the Policy Board of the WCC adopted a series of policy statements that addressed professional standards for those teaching in Catholic schools and religious education programs in the dioceses of Wisconsin. This project had been initiated in response to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' (NCCB) pastoral letter, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, which emphasized the importance of the total educational mission of the Church.

The Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin also addressed catechesis and the ministry of catechesis in *Discipleship from Age to Age: A Call for Renewal in Catechesis* in 1994, following the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This Wisconsin document continues to guide Catholic catechesis throughout the state.

The WCC, in consultation with diocesan Catholic education leaders, periodically reviews the standards for Catholic educators. Revised versions of the standards were published in 1987, 2000, and 2008. In 2022, the WCC and Catholic education leaders began the process of revising the 2008 standards. These standards are the final product of that revision process.

## TERMS DEFINED

As used in *Educator Standards by Category*, the following terms shall be defined as:

**Catechetical Leader:** a person in a leadership role with responsibility for the development and support of faith formation for adults, youth, and/or children.

**Parish Catechetical Coordinator:** a catechetical leader who assists a director or pastor with programs for adult, youth, and/or children.

**Parish Catechetical Director:** a catechetical leader who is the primary administrator of programs for adult, youth, and/or children.

**Parish Catechist:** a person who teaches in a parish catechetical program for adults, youth, and/or children.

**School/System President:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a Catholic school system or corporation who reports to a pastoral authority, a board of trustees, or similar board of limited jurisdiction.

**School Principal:** the primary catechetical, instructional, and administrative leader of a Catholic school.

**School Teacher:** a person who participates in the catechetical ministry of the Church by contracting to share, support, and integrate the faith as an educator in a Catholic school.

## STANDARDS DEFINED

As used in *Educator Standards by Category*, the following standards shall be defined as:

**Practicing Catholic:** a Catholic in good standing who participates fully in the worship and life of the Church, and who understands and accepts the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel, as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Referenced in *The National Directory for Catechesis*, pp. 228-229, 231)

**Basic Religious Education Certification\*:** recognition of professional development in Scripture, Theology, Methods/Psychology, and Spiritual Formation at a foundational level of competence, equivalent to at least forty clock hours.

**Advanced Religious Education Certification\*:** recognition of increasing professional development in Scripture, Theology, Methods/Psychology, and Spiritual Formation at a more advanced level, equivalent to at least ninety clock hours beyond the Basic level.

**Master's degree in administration:** a degree in a graduate level program of administration by an accredited institution of higher education.

\* Basic and Advanced Religious Education Certifications can be obtained through a professional development plan (PDP), hours, points, or other program, as determined by the controlling diocese.

## EDUCATOR STANDARDS BY CATEGORY

All educators in Wisconsin Catholic parishes and schools must meet the requisite requirements for their educator category as established in the following section, within the timeframe as determined by their diocese. These standards reflect the minimum requirements to be met by Catholic educators in the State of Wisconsin. A diocese and/or parish may establish greater requirements for educators within its purview.

Educators are encouraged to contact their supervisor or administrator for more information on diocesan or parish standards unique to each educator category. In addition to the following standards, educators must also adhere to all diocesan requirements regarding safe environment programs for the protection of children.

### Parish Catechetical Director

- Practicing Catholic
- Bachelor's Degree with a major in religious education or the equivalent
- Advanced Religious Education Certification

### Parish Catechetical Coordinator

- Practicing Catholic
- Advanced Religious Education Certification

### **Parish Catechist**

- Practicing Catholic
- Basic Religious Education Certification

### **School/System President**

- Practicing Catholic
- Master's degree in administration or the equivalent
- Basic Religious Education Certification with continuing efforts toward Advanced certification

### **School Principal**

- Practicing Catholic
- Master's degree with at least 18 credit hours in education or is working towards attaining such a degree and requirements
- Basic Religious Education Certification with continuing efforts toward Advanced certification

### **School Teacher Who Teaches Religion for a Secondary School**

- Practicing Catholic
- A postsecondary degree in Catholic theology
- Attain 12 semester hours of credit in teacher education as part of, or in addition to, the degree OR attain licensure/certification through an individualized plan of study approved by the diocese
- Basic Religious Education Certification with continuing efforts towards Advanced certification

### **School Teacher Who Teaches a Religion Class**

- Practicing Catholic
- Bachelor's degree
- Attain 12 semester hours of credit in teacher education as part of, or in addition to, the degree OR attain licensure/certification through an individualized plan of study approved by diocese
- Basic Religious Education Certification with continuing efforts towards Advanced certification

### **All Other School Teachers**

- Practicing Catholic<sup>1</sup>
- Bachelor's degree
- Attain 12 semester hours of credit in teacher education as part of, or in addition to, the degree OR attain licensure/certification through an individualized plan of study approved by the diocese
- Basic Religious Education Certification

---

<sup>1</sup> "While some situations might entail compelling reasons for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics." *National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 233, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, (2005). Teachers are required to support the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel, as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.