



# Certification

## in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

# Camp/Retreat Ministry



### Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in camp/retreat ministry in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Division of Ordained Ministry. These include successful completion of five (5) certification courses relating to camp/retreat ministry. Persons are certified by the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) in cooperation with GBHEM.

Courses are designed to provide graduate academic experience for persons to qualify them for certification. Other requirements for certification include personal and church qualifications and experience in the area of camp/retreat ministry as determined by GBHEM.

The core courses include theories and methods of teaching the Bible, exploration of the pedagogical and theological bases for ministries, and equipping persons as disciples for the transformation of the world. Courses also include an understanding of The United Methodist Church, its structure, curriculum, and resources.

Candidates may participate in more than one course each year. A maximum of ten (10) years is allowed for the certification studies in ministry careers. Two years' experience working in specialized area is required for certification. Experience is defined as a contractual agreement with supervision, accountability, evaluation, and continuing education in a specialized ministry area. Sufficient experience is approved by the annual conference BOM and may also require pre-approval.

### Core Competencies expected for certification in Camp/Retreat Ministry:

1. Ability to develop/implement camp/retreat programs that communicate to all persons an understanding of and commitment to Christian teaching according to the heritage of the United Methodist movement.
2. Ability to articulate and implement biblical/theological foundations for Christian hospitality.
3. Ability to utilize the camp/retreat setting in developing spiritual leaders.
4. Ability to lead others to address ecological and social justice concerns as a part of Christian discipleship, including the ability to develop programs and resources.
5. Understanding of camp/retreat center administration, including the ability to develop programs and resources.
6. Ability to dialogue and partner with ethnic leaders and their communities through camp/retreat ministry.

### Required Courses for Camp/Retreat Ministry

Certification in camp/retreat ministry in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. These include successful completion of three (3) core courses of three (3) semester hours credit each and a United Methodist



Studies course (unless the candidate has previously taken an approved graduate credit course in this area as part of their theological education) and one (1) elective graduate level certification course of two (2) semester hours.

1. The elective shall be within six (6) possible prescribed electives. (See list of electives)
2. A maximum of three (3) certification courses may be taken online.

It is required that these studies be completed through seminary course work or special educational events developed by the schools of theology and other graduate schools of The United Methodist Church. Exceptions may be made for other seminaries on the University Senate-approved list in consultation with an annual conference BOM and GBHEM.

## CORE COURSES:

1. **FAITH FORMATION AND CHRISTIAN LIVING:** This course explores the biblical foundations of camp/retreat ministry and faith formation. It includes creative strategies for reaching out and welcoming persons of the twenty-first century into faith formation experiences; preparing intentional pathways for people to connect and deepen their relationship with God; effective methods for teaching core elements of Christian faith and discipleship; and providing participants and guests with opportunities to actively practice Christian discipleship with one another and all of God's creation. Strengthening the partnership between camp/retreat ministry, local congregations and conference ministries for long-term faith formation and developing spiritual leaders is an important aspect of this course. It also covers the unique dynamic of Christian hospitality, faith formation when hosting culturally diverse guests and groups that are not church-related.
2. **THE THEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY OF COMMON GROUND:** This course focuses on the role of camp/retreat ministry in inspiring and training spiritual leaders who shape society by engaging communities and congregations in ministries of earth care and social justice as an expression of holy common ground. Students will study biblical and theological perspectives on the link between faith in God and loving interdependence among people and all of creation. The course further gives a basic overview of key ecological principals and environmental concerns facing contemporary society; studies in global social justice aspects of the ecological crisis; explores site operational practices that establish camp/retreat/conference centers as Common Ground Centers where people practice Christian stewardship of creation, justice and mercy; and discuss strategies for training and involving both urban and rural leaders for Common Ground Ministries that reach out beyond the camp/retreat site or local congregation.
3. **THE MINISTRY OF CAMP/RETREAT CENTER MANAGEMENT:** This course provides an overview of Christian camp/retreat/conference center administration that includes: leading a mission-drive ministry; discerning shared visions of implementation; offering Christian hospitality and hosting guest

groups; selecting and developing volunteer and paid staff; partnering with local churches, judicatory entities and other organizations; managing food services; maintaining grounds and facilities; providing risk management and health care; assuring the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults; creating and managing budgets; marketing and public relations; office management; establishing operational standards, procedures and guidelines; strengthening boards and committees, spiritual nurture and renewal of residential staff; continuing education opportunities and resources.

4. **UNITED METHODIST STUDIES:** Understanding of and grounding in United Methodist doctrine and polity, and the practice of ministry. The course may include a study of doctrine, general rules, social principles, and polity of the UMC as found in the *Book of Discipline*; historical issues in UMC polity (organization and structure of contemporary United Methodism).

### Electives – One course of two credits must be taken from this group.

1. Biblical Foundations for Camp/Retreat Ministry
2. Developing Christian Camp/Retreat Curriculum and Events
3. Developing Environmental Education/Social Justice Programs & Resources
4. Partnering with Ethnic Leaders and Communities in Camp/Retreat Ministries
5. Fund-raising and Financing for Camp/Retreat Ministries
6. Volunteer and Staff Hiring, Training, and Supervision for Nonprofit Organizations.

### Should I seek Professional or Paraprofessional Certification?

**Professional certification** is available to persons with an undergraduate degree and graduate credit courses at a United Methodist Seminary, approved graduate school, or students graduating from a United Methodist-related college, where they have completed the required courses in an area of specialization and served two years in a specialized ministry area.

**Paraprofessional certification** is available to persons who may not have an undergraduate degree and are working in areas of specialized ministry. Paraprofessional certification does not carry academic credit and is designed for persons seeking training in a specialized ministry as a worker or volunteer.



#### General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

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