



# Certification

## in Specialized Ministries in The United Methodist Church

# Christian Education



## Educational Requirements

Individuals seeking professional certification in Christian education 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 Christian education. Persons are certified by their 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 Christian education as determined by GBHEM.

The five (5) 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.

Each course must be offered for no less than two (2) semester (or equivalent quarter) hours of graduate academic credit. All certification courses must be taken at a United Methodist seminary or approved graduate schools. Exceptions may be made for other seminaries on the University Senate-approved list in consultation with an annual conference BOM and GBHEM.

Three of the five courses may be taken online.

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 Christian Education

1. Ability to develop and administer a Christian education program that develops faith formation and equips people to become disciples of Jesus Christ working for the transformation of the world.
2. Knowledge of faith development for different age groups and ways to guide the teaching and learning for faith development and biblical understanding.
3. Ability to relate to people, to work with volunteers and staff, and to function in the role of Christian educator with emotional maturity and sound judgment.
4. Demonstrate leadership through an ability to integrate theory and practice with an understanding of and commitment to the church's educational ministry.



## Required Courses for Christian Education

1. **TEACHING BIBLICAL FAITH:** A study of the biblical message in the Old and New Testaments and the relation of the Bible to teaching Christian education.
2. **TEACHING THEOLOGY:** Thinking theologically about the ministry of Christian Education, empowering laity as theologians and exploring Christian doctrines.
3. **TEACHING/LEARNING:** Historical, theological, and philosophical foundations of Christian education with attention to ways people develop and learn across the age span and how teaching takes place in the church.
4. **ADMINISTRATION/LEADERSHIP:** An examination of the role of the educator in ministry through administration and leadership in local church education.
5. **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 principals, and polity of the UMC as found in the *Book of Discipline*; historical issues in UMC polity (organization and structure of contemporary United Methodism).

**GBHEM may accept** the two (2) courses in Bible and theology required for other areas of certification as meeting the requirements for Christian education certification when these courses have been taken within the past (10) years and a special assignment related to Christian education is completed in consultation with GBHEM. The course Teaching/Learning is common to both Christian education and children's ministry.

## 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.



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