



DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA

Diocesan policy on ADULT RELIGIOUS FORMATION AND EDUCATION

‘Continuing formation in the faith is directed not only to the individual Christian, to accompany them in their journey towards holiness, but also to the Christian community as such so that it may mature also in its interior life of love of God and of the brethren as well as in its openness to the world as a missionary community’ (*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 70)

The development of a programme of adult religious formation and education was identified from the beginning of our diocesan process ‘Forward and Outward Together’ as a key priority. This will happen at different levels.

Adult religious education should be offered both for lay people training for particular ministry and service and for lay people seeking simply to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their faith.

Much can be - and is already being - organised locally. Parish, cluster or deanery adult religious education and training programmes, faith-sharing groups and Scripture-study groups are strongly encouraged. Many parishes are already successfully running the CaFE programme and similar schemes.

Alongside such opportunities, our diocese is introducing two distinct but interconnected programmes: the CCRS and a Diocesan Certificate. Both will be modular and delivered locally, with certificates awarded. Both will take some time to develop, but can be built up systematically.

Both diocesan programmes are to be delivered by a range of people from both inside and outside our diocese: priests, deacons, religious and lay people with expertise and communication skills in these areas. The Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge has generously offered its support for the CCRS.

Good publicity and administration will be required for each certificate.

Both the CCRS and Diocesan Certificate will be presented at an annual Mass at the Cathedral.

1. National (Bishops’ Conference) Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS)

All lay people offering themselves for full-time or major part-time ministry are urged to undertake the full CCRS programme. All Catholic teachers are expected to obtain the certificate.

The CCRS in East Anglia is to be organised professionally and delivered in a way which concurs with its original intention: to provide an officially-recognised diploma which seeks to guarantee that the recipient has a good understanding of core Catholic teaching (Old Testament, New Testament, Christ, Church, Sacraments and Moral Theology) along with practical skills (school teacher, catechist, pastoral assistant, etc). These 8 modules are to be offered on Saturdays at one or other of our main centres of population in the diocese.

The modules will no longer be delivered at parish level or through small group discussion.

Those seeking certification will be required to complete the necessary reading and essays.

The CCRS will be delivered by good teachers (from within and outside the diocese) proficient in their subjects and able to communicate well at this level.

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2. Diocesan Certificate

Not all lay people have the time, ability or desire to take on the CCRS with its assessment requirements, and yet many wish for and need ongoing education and formation in their Catholic faith and ministry.

The diocese now offers a modular programme, less formal than the CCRS, delivered at various locations in the diocese. Lay people who attend the CCRS study days but do not wish to complete the written assignments may build up credits towards the certificate. Other study days on faith and ministry topics will be made available.

There will be various levels of the Certificate (Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 etc).

Each level requires attendance at four modules, which must always include at least two teaching modules and one practical module (i.e. either 3 teaching modules and 1 practical module, or 2 teaching modules and 2 practical modules).

Each module must be formally agreed and recognised by the diocese before delivery if it is to count towards the certificate.

Modules are offered on Saturdays at one or other of our main centres of population. The normal programme runs from 11.00-3.00, with registration and coffee from 10.30, a 45-minute break for packed lunches, and tea and departure at 3.00. Some modules may require a longer session.

Some of these modules could be delivered ecumenically.

Qualifying towards the Diocesan Certificate began in September 2005.

Teaching Modules to be offered include:

Old Testament and New Testament
 Our image of God (Holy Trinity, etc); Being human (Creation); Christ the Saviour
 Faith & Discipleship (our common calling)
 Nature & Mission of the Church;
 Worship and Prayer; Spirituality;
 Sacraments (Baptism; Confirmation; Eucharist; Reconciliation; Anointing; Marriage; Holy Orders)
 Moral life; Life issues; Catholic Social Teaching (Justice & Peace)
 Ecumenism; Inter-Faith issues;
 Church History;
 Mary and the Saints; Eternal Life.

Practical Modules to be offered include:

Commissioning Days for Lay Ministers of Holy Communion (& similar for Readers).
 Catechists' Training: sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation & Marriage (separate); Coordinating RCIA; Catechesis for Children at Non-Catholic Schools.
 Parish Financial Administration; Children's Liturgy Leadership; Church Music; Evangelisation;
 Parish Pastoral Ministry; Hospital Visiting; Prison Visiting; Liturgical Planning; Parenting;
 Parish Councils; Being a School Governor; Youth Work & Ministry; etc