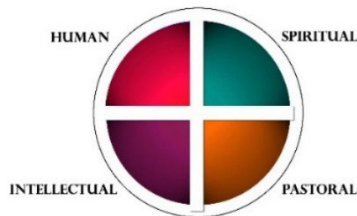


## FACT SHEET



# LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY INSTITUTE

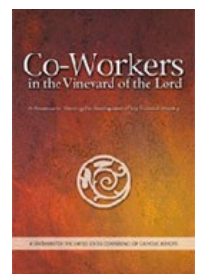
- The Lay Ecclesial Ministry Institute (LEMI) is a four-year comprehensive ministry formation program for lay leaders in the Diocese of Richmond.
- To apply, candidates must be actively ministering in a formal leadership role in the diocese for a minimum of one year. Roles include: **Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education, Youth Ministers, RCIA/Adult Faith Formation Coordinators, Campus Ministers, and Catholic School Religion Teachers.**



“The four areas of formation—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral – that provide a framework for the formation of deacons and priests provide a framework for lay ecclesial ministers as well.” (*Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, p. 34.)

- Two academic tracts with tuition subsidized by Annual Diocesan Appeal for **Intellectual formation**:
  - **LEMI-Traditional**: Candidate earns a Master’s degree in Theology from a regionally accredited Catholic University. LEMI offers an \$800 tuition subsidy per graduate class.
  - **LEMI-Certificate**: Candidate earns a Certificate of Study with Continuing Education Units from University of Dayton.
- LEMI candidates are required to attend LEMI workshops in **Human and Pastoral formation** to enhance ministry skills and help them build wholesome, healthy relationships with those to whom they minister.
- For their **Spiritual formation**, candidates are encouraged to work with a spiritual director and are required to attend four annual overnight LEMI spiritual retreats.
- Since 2010, lay ministers from over 60 parishes have taken advantage of LEMI. Over the last eight years, 64 candidates have been commissioned as Lay Ecclesial Ministers for the Diocese of Richmond. Twenty-two candidates are currently in formation and are expected to be commissioned over the next few years.
- Upon commissioning, each candidate receives a \$1,000 financial award from the diocese. In addition, those employed by the diocese are eligible to receive a promotion in pay grade.

LEMI is guided by *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers* and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry*. “Just as the diocesan bishop oversees the preparation of priests and deacons of the diocese, he is rightly attentive to the proper preparation of the growing number of lay women and men who minister in the Church.” (*Co-Workers*, p. 55)



Updated 1/2024

# LEMI Testimonials

"In my service as Bishop, I oversee the preparation of priests and deacons as well as the proper preparation of the women and men who minister in the Church. This authorization of lay ecclesial ministers demonstrates to the community in which they serve that their work has my confidence and support. With the many benefits to the individual, the pastor and the parish community, I encourage pastors to take advantage of LEMI and recommend this comprehensive formation program to their parish staff members."

***Most. Rev. Barry C. Knestout, Bishop of Richmond***

"Theological training, pastoral training, spiritual formation and human formation – the four pillars that were established for formation for priests and deacons are applied to the laity as well. My staff member who went through LEMI...came out of LEMI with a proficiency that sets her up for *the future*."

***Msgr. Timothy Keeney, Pastor, Church of the Incarnation***

"I saw that the LEMI program was greatly beneficial to the individual person but also to the parish as well. They're getting great intellectual formation but also spiritual formation, pastoral formation and all those human elements. What I found is that it made them competent and gave them a lot of confidence."

***Very Rev. Eric J Ayers, Pastor, Saint Bede***

"The human formation is so important. You need to be able to relate to people. You need to have those skills of dealing with difficult situations. People come from a lot of different backgrounds and they may be hurting in certain ways. You have to be able to be sensitive to people."

***Fr. Kevin Segerblom, Pastor, Basilica of St. Andrew Catholic Church***

I decided to join the LEMI program to deepen my skills of teaching Religion, as well as to study more about God. This four year journey pushed me beyond my limits in ways that complimented my classroom, family, friends, and relationship with God. It is structured with the same four pillars of training provided in formation for deacons and priests. LEMI is far beyond attaining a Masters in Theology. I received theological knowledge, a network of spiritual leaders, confidence in my leadership as a layperson, pastoral and ministerial formation, and a deeper relationship with God.

***Jeanne Slifka, Middle School Theology Teacher, Saint Edward Epiphany School***

As someone who loves to learn, the LEMI journey exceeded my expectations and helped form my Catholic faith in ways I could never have expected. The curriculum, faculty, and classmates challenged me and made me recognize just how beautiful our Catholic faith is. The LEMI journey is truly transformational, and the knowledge and experience gained allows me to share our Catholic faith in ways I never could before!

***Bridgett M. Passauer, Coordinator of Evangelization, Adult Faith Formation, and Community Life, Church of the Ascension***

LEMI tested and strengthened my resolve and my faith, expanded my capacity for compassion, and deepened my love and understanding of scripture. My formation journey helped me to grow in humility as I discovered the vastness of what I don't know and recognized that everyone I meet can teach me something. My commissioning experience affirmed my vocation as a lay minister serving the church, called to use my voice to praise Him, share my gifts for His Glory, and encourage others to do the same.

***Laura Stapleton, Coordinator of Christian Formation, St. Mary Catholic Church***