



Echo Application Prospectus

Institute for Church Life

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Echo is a two-year graduate service program that offers participants the opportunity to earn an M.A. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame's Department of Theology, to serve the Church in parish catechetical leadership or as a theology teacher in a Catholic school, and to live in an intentional faith community while engaging in integrative spiritual formation.

Our application process is one of mutual discernment, both helping prospective candidates determine if Echo is the best program for them, and also assisting the Echo staff in learning more about an applicant's potential for success in all dimensions of Echo. We hope you will find this *Application Prospectus* to be a useful tool during your discernment, particularly as you begin the application process.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

- A. Applicants must have received, or expect to receive, a **bachelor's degree** from an accredited institution of higher education by the summer following the submission of their application, with a minimum of **6 credit hours** in **Theology or Religious Studies**.¹
- B. Selected applicants must be **interviewed** prior to an offer of admission to the program.
- C. Applicants must demonstrate the **maturity** necessary for leadership formation in parish ministry or teaching theology.
- D. Applicants must express willingness to **promote the teaching of the Catholic Church** as an essential aspect of parish catechetical leadership and teaching theology.
- E. Applicants must be willing to **serve in an assigned partner diocese** that is host to a small group of other apprentice catechetical leaders and/or theology teachers.
- F. Applicants must commit to **two years of service** under the direction of an experienced, diocesan-approved parish catechetical leader or school mentor.
- G. Applicants must be **single (non-married), lay persons** committed to living in an intentional Echo faith community (house) with other community members. (*Echo is unable to admit married applicants or applicants who intend to marry during the two years of program participation.*)
- H. Before a candidate is interviewed, he/she must take the **GRE** and submit scores by **January 10**.
- I. All Echo participants (placed in the parish or teaching theology track) are required to have a valid driver's license and are strongly advised to have their own vehicle during the "academic year" portion of their two-year diocesan placement (August-May). Due to varied placement locations and schedules, public transportation and carpooling are not adequate sources of primary transportation to accommodate program, community, and work requirements during the academic year. Please bring questions or concerns to the Echo staff.
- J. Echo participants must be fully-initiated members of the Catholic Church, having received all three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation).

¹ The 6 credit hours meet the minimum admission requirements of the M.A. Theology degree program of the Notre Dame Department of Theology. Please address qualification concerns early in the application process.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The application for both tracks of Echo (parish catechetical leadership and teaching theology) are shared. You may choose to apply to either or both tracks (as indicated in the Supplemental Application). Aptitude for admission to each track is assessed separately.

By 11:59pm on January 10:

1. Apply online to the [Echo program](#) through the [Notre Dame Graduate School](#) website.
2. Complete the **Echo Supplemental Application** (available on the Echo website) and upload it to your Graduate School Application. (You will not be able to submit the Graduate School Application without completing and uploading the Echo Supplemental Application.) *Application checklist below.*
3. Take the **GRE**, and submit scores directly to the Notre Dame Graduate School. *(Please note: There is a 10-14 day processing period before the Graduate School receives your GRE scores from the test center. If you take the GRE after December 31, please also **email your scores** directly to cmccance@nd.edu.)*

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Echo Application is hosted by the Notre Dame Graduate School at their [website](#). The Additional Program Upload required for both tracks of Echo can be viewed and downloaded directly from the Echo website, with your responses composed in a separate document to be uploaded to the Graduate School Application.

Once you have decided to begin the online application, please notify **Ciara Kanczuzewski**, Coordinator of Recruitment & Program Administration (cmccance@nd.edu), to ensure that your application will be reviewed.

APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Please consult this list to assure that you submit a complete application by the January 10 deadline.

- ❑ **Complete the online Notre Dame Graduate School Application**, which includes submitting the **Echo Supplemental Application** (25 questions), Unofficial Transcripts, GRE Scores, Statement of Intent, Resume/C.V., Recommendation Letters, and the \$75 Application Fee. *As you complete the online application, you should be able to leave the application and return to work on it later, provided that you log in with the same email and password. Please see the separate **Echo/Graduate School Application Instructions** document for detailed directions.*
- ❑ **Request three professor recommendations.** *Invite three (3) professors, who can speak to your strengths, weaknesses, and suitability for graduate study in theology to write a letter for you. These must be professors who have had you in class (in which you received a letter grade). Send them the **“Professor Recommendation Letter Instructions”** document (found on the Echo website under “Application Materials”) that will explain the recommendation letter process. Letters will be submitted electronically through the Graduate School Application (no paper letter necessary).*
- ❑ **Request one personal recommendation.** *Invite someone to write a letter for you who can speak directly to your strengths, weaknesses, and capacities for leadership, ministry, spiritual development, communal living, and educating in the faith. (Ideal recommenders include previous employers, community service leaders/supervisors, dorm rectors/hall directors, and campus ministry leaders; recommenders should not include family members or peers.) Send them the **“Personal Recommendation Letter Instructions”** document (found on the Echo website under “Application Materials”) that will explain the recommendation letter process. Letters will be submitted electronically through the Graduate School Application (no paper letter necessary).*

N.B. Applicants from Notre Dame, St. Mary’s College, and Holy Cross College (Notre Dame, IN) who do not select their dorm rector to write their personal recommendation letter must (in addition to their other four recommendation letters), request that their Rector submit the **Rector Recommendation Letter**. Please follow the instructions found under “Application Materials” on the Echo website.

- ❑ **Make plans to take the GRE:** GRE scores may be submitted *along with* the Graduate School/Echo Application (if you apply early), and must be submitted by the January 10 deadline, sent directly to the University of Notre Dame Graduate School. The Graduate School answers [frequently asked questions about the GRE](#) on its website. *(See note above about emailing scores.)*

ADMISSIONS TIMELINE

- **Fall:** Make contact with Ciara Kanczuzewski, Coordinator of Recruitment & Program Administration; verify that you meet the pre-requirements, or make plans to fulfill them; look for Echo representatives at a nearby college service/career fair; read through the Application Prospectus, Echo/Graduate School Application Instructions, and Echo Supplemental Application; start the application; invite recommenders; and, prepare for and take the GRE.
- **December 1:** Deadline for Echo application fee waiver (*Email echond@nd.edu by Nov 26.*)
- **11:59pm, January 10:** Online Echo application deadline & GRE deadline
- **Mid-to-late February:** Interviews for selected applicants
- **Mid-March to Mid-April:** Rolling admissions notifications
- **End of April:** Echo class announced
- **Mid-May:** Notification of diocesan/community placement

ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

From mid-March to mid-April, Applicants will receive one of 4 responses from Echo regarding their status:

1. **Offered Admission to a specific track** (*determined by the Echo Admissions Committee*)
2. **Offered Admission generally to Echo (for applicants to both tracks)** *N.B. specific track will be determined by the Echo Admissions Committee as parish and theology teaching spots are confirmed.*
3. **Wait Listed for Admission**
4. **Not Offered Admission**

Explanation of responses:

Applicants offered admission have two options in response to their invitation:

a) to accept the invitation, or **b) decline** the invitation.

N.B. There is no “defer” option from one year to another. Applicants who decline their offer to join Echo may re-apply for a following year by updating their application; however, future admission will not be guaranteed.

Regarding the Wait List:

Echo will create a wait list of qualified applicants. If an admitted applicant declines his/her invitation, an applicant from the wait list may be offered admission. Decisions about whom to admit from the wait list are made as spots come available.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS & COMMITMENTS

*The Echo program welcomes candidates from the Catholic Church who represent a broad array of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Admitted applicants who accept the offer of admission are **expected to fulfill a two-year commitment** that includes:*

1. **M.A. in Theology:** Engage in scholarly work and study as a theology graduate student in the University's Department of Theology;
2. **Service to the Church:** Serve as a parish apprentice catechetical leader or as a Catholic school theology teacher in an assigned Echo partner diocese and parish or school, and participate in professional development workshops directed by Echo;
3. **Living in an Intentional Faith Community:** Live in community with other Echo participants, sharing common meals, prayer, weekly community time, and household responsibilities;
4. **Integrative Human Formation:** Engage in human development workshops on topics such as communication, conflict management, healthy boundaries, family systems, emotional health, and relationships and sexuality, and commit to healthy approaches to integrate these areas into one's life and relationships.
5. **Integrative Spiritual Formation:** Commit to personal and communal prayer, participate in the Church's sacramental life, and engage in spiritual direction and program and personal retreats.

Please [contact our Echo staff](#) at any point in your discernment or application process. We look forward to accompanying you on this journey as you consider Echo for next year, and are willing to help you throughout this process. May it be a joy-filled exploration of your gifts and God's call in your life.