PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Echo Parish Catechetical Ministry: Echo holistically forms young adults to be ministerial leaders through a two-year, ministry apprenticeship, life in intentional community, human and spiritual formation, and a tuition-free M.A. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame. Echo apprentices spend two summers at Notre Dame, and two academic years (August through May) providing direct service to Catholic parishes through a variety of catechetical ministries (such as RCIA, Youth Ministry, Adult Faith Formation, Social Justice Ministry), all while living in intentional faith communities with other Echo apprentices.

Echo Teaching Theology: Starting in 2014, Echo now offers placements in Catholic secondary schools. The primary work of these Echo participants will be as theology teachers who contribute to a school’s mission of Catholic faith formation, both inside and outside of the classroom. Echo theology teachers will participate fully in the comprehensive formation program offered by Echo, including pursuing a Master’s degree in theology and appropriate pedagogical preparation for the teaching placement.

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 multi-faceted formation. 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 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 and submit GRE scores by February 1st.

¹ The 6 credit hours meet the admission requirements of the M.A. Theology degree program of the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Please address qualification concerns early in the application process.
APPLICATION DEADLINES for Echo

The application process for Echo is a three-step process. Additionally, the application for Echo (parish catechetical ministry) and Echo 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.

By February 1:

3. Take the GRE, and submit scores directly to the Notre Dame Graduate School. (Please note: There is a 10-14 day delay before the Graduate School receives your GRE scores from the test center. If you take the GRE after January 15th, please also email your scores directly to ashelide@nd.edu.)

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The body of the Echo 10 application is completed online through the Notre Dame Graduate School “Apply Yourself” program. 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. N.B. Only one application is necessary, even if applying to both Echo (parish-based) and Echo Teaching Theology.

Once you have decided to begin the online application, please notify Aimee Shelide Mayer, Assistant Director for Recruitment & Outreach (ashelide@nd.edu), to insure that your application will be reviewed.

APPLICATION CHECK LIST

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

- Complete the online Notre Dame Graduate School Application, which includes submitting the Echo Supplemental Application (25 questions), Unofficial Transcripts, GRE Scores (by Feb 1st), 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 username and pin number. 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 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 “Apply Yourself” Application (no paper letter necessary).

- Request one personal recommendation. Invite someone to write a letter for you, who can speak directly to your capacities for leadership, ministry, spiritual enrichment, 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 “Apply Yourself” Application (no paper letter necessary).

- Make plans to take the GRE: GRE scores may be submitted along with the Graduate School/Echo Application, or may be submitted soon after the January 10th deadline, sent directly to the University.

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.
of Notre Dame Graduate School by **February 1st**. The Graduate School answers [frequently asked questions about the GRE](#) on its website. *(See note above about emailing scores.)*

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### ADMISSION TIMELINE

- **Fall**: Make contact with Aimee Shelide Mayer, Asst. Director of Recruitment & Outreach; verify that you meet the pre-requirements, or make plans to take classes 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 Additional Echo Program Upload; start the application; invite recommenders; and, prepare for and take the GRE.
- **December 1**: Deadline for Echo application fee waiver. *(Contact Aimee Shelide Mayer by Nov 26.)*
- **11:59pm, January 10**: Online Echo Application deadline.
- **February 1**: GRE scores due to the Notre Dame Graduate School.
- **February**: Interviews for select applicants.
- **Mid-March**: Admissions notification to all applicants by (or before) this date.
- **Late-March/early April**: Commitment deadline for admitted applicants.
- **April**: Notification of diocesan/community placement.

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### ADMISSION DECISIONS

By late February, Applicants will receive one of 3 responses from Echo regarding their admission status:

1. **Offered Admission**
2. **Not Offered Admission**
3. **Wait Listed for Admission**

**Explanation of responses:**

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

- **a)** to accept the invitation;
- **b)** decline the invitation; or
- **c)** request to be put on the wait list.²

*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 after an admitted applicant declines his/her offer of admission.

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### FORMATION EXPECTATIONS & COMMITMENTS

The Echo program welcomes candidates from the Catholic Church and from 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. **Intellectual Formation**: Scholarly work and study as an M.A. Theology graduate student.
2. **Professional-Ministerial Formation**: Service in Echo as a parish apprentice or theology teacher. *(Placement in a particular diocese is made by the Echo program in consultation with the partner diocese.)*
3. **Human Formation**: Experience of human development workshops on topics such as communication, conflict management, healthy boundaries, family systems, emotional health, and relationships and sexuality, and a commitment to engage in healthy integration of these areas.
4. **Communal Formation**: Experience living and participating in an intentional faith community with other Echo participants through common meals, prayer, and household responsibilities.
5. **Spiritual Formation**: Participation in sacramental life, retreats, prayer, and spiritual direction.

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2 If unable to decide by the commitment deadline, the admitted applicant sacrifices his/her offer to someone on the wait list and can choose to be added to the wait list and notified should another spot come available.

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