PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Echo Faith Formation Leadership Program is a dynamic two-year, service, learning, and formation program that focuses on forming leaders and serving the Catholic Church through partnerships between the University of Notre Dame and dioceses of the United States. Echo participants benefit from a holistic formation process that prepares a new generation of well-formed and informed catechists and theology teachers, capable of witnessing to and passing on the faith. Echo partner dioceses provide parish and/or school settings as placements where participants can both learn about and serve their apostolate for two consecutive years.

Echo participants engage in a comprehensive formation program that involves the following dimensions:

1. Intellectural Formation: Scholarly work and study as an M.A. Theology graduate student at Notre Dame, and practical preparation for teaching the faith.

2. Professional-Ministerial Formation: Mentored-service in Echo as a parish apprentice or theology teacher.
   a. Parish catechetical ministry: Direct service to Catholic parishes through a variety of catechetical ministries (such as RCIA, Youth Ministry, Adult Faith Formation, and Social Justice Ministry).
   b. Theology teaching: Direct service to Catholic schools through teaching theology in the classroom, and engaging in extracurricular activities as time and formation commitments allow.

3. Human & Communal Formation:
   a. Experience living and participating in an intentional faith community with other apprentices through common meals, prayer, and household responsibilities.
   b. Experience human development in the context of community, and participate in workshops on topics such as communication, conflict management, healthy boundaries, family systems, emotional health, relationships and sexuality, and a commitment to engage in healthy integration of these areas.

4. Spiritual Formation: Participation in ongoing formation meetings, sacramental life, personal and communal retreats, prayer, and spiritual direction. Spiritual formation engages participants explicitly in the integration of all areas of formation, while growing in adult Christian discipleship.

RECOMMENDATION LETTER INSTRUCTIONS: Personal Reference

You have been chosen by someone you know to serve as a personal recommender for Echo, a program of the Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame (described above). Given the applicant’s intention (application to Echo Parish Catechetical Ministry or Echo Teaching Theology), please speak to his/her aptitude for graduate-level theology work, in addition to work as a parish minister or theology teacher at a secondary school. If an applicant is applying to both tracks, please speak specifically to his/her aptitude for each track separately.

To this end, please prepare a letter that assesses, to the best of your ability, the applicant’s capacities for graduate study, leadership, pastoral ministry and/or theology teaching, spiritual enrichment, and communal living, including areas of particular strength, as well as areas for growth. Furthermore, as someone who knows this particular applicant perhaps more personally than his/her professor references do, you will be able to specifically speak to the candidate’s “relationality,” in regards to how he/she interacts with people of diverse ages, backgrounds, personality types, preferences, etc. Additionally, the Echo selection committee hopes that your evaluation of this applicant will help to illustrate this applicant’s character, especially relative to his/her integrity, professional promise, spiritual richness, and ability to genuinely share oneself with others. How mature and responsible is this person, and how open is he/she to a wide array of formation experiences?

Please feel free to include any other necessary or pertinent information that you deem helpful for the Selection Committee to know about the applicant in consideration. You will submit your letter electronically, following prompts from the Notre Dame Graduate School. The GS will also prompt you to complete an Evaluation/Questionnaire regarding the applicant. Thank you for your thoughtfulness regarding this request.