

Script for Presbytery Presentation

INTRODUCTION TO THE CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

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Introduce yourself and your connection to the Educator Certification process.

Are you or is someone in your church serving as an educator in your church, council or agency—either as a volunteer or as paid staff? Do you feel like you would like to have a stronger biblical and theological foundation and greater skills in educational ministry leadership? Then the Educator’s Certification Committee (ECC) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has created process for certification or endorsement for you (and maybe others serving alongside you in educational ministry, as well). The certification process sets standards for the preparation and performance of those involved in Christian education, both professional and volunteer. I’d like to talk with you today about this process of certification and endorsement.

Perhaps you or someone you know would be a good candidate for one of the two levels of certification. By the end of this presentation, I’d love for you to name at least one person you think needs to hear about these opportunities and then pass it along to them (maybe it’s you!).

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There are two levels in the certification process. Certified Christian Educator (CCE) and Christian Education Associate (CEA). The first thing to do is to determine which level would be most appropriate for you or someone else serving in educational ministry.

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You can see here the main differences between the two levels. Those who enter the CCE level must have a bachelor’s or master’s degree and are people who have at least a year’s worth of experience in Christian education ministry leadership. The CCE process is more in-depth and time intensive. The Christian Education Associate level is more for those new to educational ministry who need basic knowledge and skills in

Christian education. You can find more information online about the CCE level of certification at www.pcusa.org/christianeducators. Today, I'd like to tell you more about the recently revamped level of Christian Education Associate (CEA).

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At the beginning of 2021, new requirements were introduced for the CEA because of the changing needs of churches as they see memberships and budgets decline. It is no longer the possibility for many churches to support a full-time professional educator on staff.

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The purpose of the CEA endorsement option is “to introduce the educator to basic knowledge and skills in Christian education, and to encourage the educator to consider further coursework—potentially even seeking to pursue the Certified Christian Education level of certification.”

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Who should consider the CEA process?

- It's open to anyone involved in the educational ministry of their church, council or an organization associated with the church.
- You can be a volunteer or paid staff.
- Someone who wants to gain knowledge or develop skills.
- Especially geared for folks who to seek more knowledge and skills but don't have access to continuing education funds.

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The CEA endorsement is a five step process. You can see each step listed here.

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First, you need to apply. The CEA option is open to anyone in the PC(USA) regardless of educational background. There are no employment or volunteer hour requirements but you do have to be actively participating in the educational ministry of your church. There is not a lot of expense involved as most of the study can be accomplished through self-study with easily accessed resources such as books and on-line articles and videos. You'll be assigned an advisor as soon as you complete the application.

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Once entered into the process, you will receive a link to the initial assessments and you'll need to complete initial assessments in six content areas: Biblical Interpretation; Reformed Theology; Religious Education Theory and Practice; Human Growth and Faith Development; Worship and Sacraments; and Presbyterian Polity, Program, and Mission.

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These assessments simply give you an idea of how much foundational knowledge you already have upon which to build upon. They set the stage for the next step—the development of a plan of study in coordination with a certification advisor with your presbytery (an advisor will be made available to you when you apply).

You can choose to approach your study one content area at a time or you can take the assessments all at one time.

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This is an example of one of the questions from the Worship & Sacraments Initial Assessment. After you've answered all 12 questions, you'll receive your results immediately. The correct answers will also be identified.

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After you receive your results, you'll meet with your advisor to set up a plan of study for each content area. The advisor will help direct you toward books and resources in the

areas, identified by your initial assessment, where you need additional knowledge and skills. Then you will work at your pace to do the elements of the plan, using your certification advisor as a conversation partner. As you complete your Plan of Study, your advisor will help to determine your readiness to take the Final Assessments.

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The Final Assessments are a combination of case studies, lesson plans and reflections on theological themes. They are open book and you can use the help of your pastor, your advisor and others to offer guidance and review your responses. The submitted assessments will be read by members of the Educator Certification Committee. If approved, you can move to the next content area until all are successfully completed. If not approved, you can retake any content area final assessment needed.

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When all are done, the ECC will endorse you as a CEA and your accomplishment will be celebrated.

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Are there any questions about the CEA process or who it is designed for?

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You can review the complete process for the CCE and the CEA at www.pcusa.org/christianeducators. If you have additional questions, you can speak with me (*or name any other presbytery certification advisors*) or you can email Martha Miller, Educator Certification Coordinator, at Martha.Miller@pcusa.org. I hope you will consider this process or follow up with someone in your church or in the presbytery whom you think would benefit from this process.