

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY POLICY ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR/CHURCH PROFESSIONALS

Christian education is an intentional vehicle of the Church for sanctification, growing in our response to the Word of God. Learning what it means to “live into our baptismal covenant” is a task which Christians are called to do and which educational ministry is called to nurture and support (BOO G-14.0700). In response to the Presbyterian Church USA’s recognition that God calls some to be educators, there should be a stated covenant relationship between Presbytery, calling bodies and Christian Educators, (Christian Educators, Certified and Certified Associate Christian Educators or Directors of Christian Education (DCE) working toward certification, etc. employed full or part-time are herein called Christian Educators).

A Christian Educator is a person whose gifts, professional preparation, and calling by God enable him or her to give effective service in the ministry of education to the Church. In plain terms, a Christian Educator brings a wide variety of skills to a church to help a congregation focus on its calling, involve people in a meaningful way, and reach its significant goals as a Christian community, to “equip the saints” through Christian education and nurture.

When a congregation reaches the point of needing an additional staff person, contact should be made to the **General Presbyter** and/or **Committee on Ministry Liaison** to seek information and help in evaluating the needs of the congregation with regard to the new position. Assistance will be given in looking at the needs of the church to determine if the position is best filled by an Associate Pastor, Christian Educator or non-ordained specialty ministry (such as a youth director). Support will be given by the Presbytery staff person in conducting a local or national search for the position.

Recognizing that Christian Educators contribute much to the churches of Charlotte Presbytery and to the work and ministry of Charlotte Presbytery, the following actions are recommended to the Committee on Ministry regarding Christian Educators:

1. When a church is seeking a Christian Educator, a search committee will be formed which will write a job description for the position and will complete a Church Information Form for distribution to possible candidates. (There are minimum terms of call for full-time pastors/Certified Christian Educators as approved by the Presbytery. (BOO G-14.0530)
2. When a certified Christian Educator, Certified Associate Christian Educator or Educator working towards certification is to be employed by a church within Presbytery that the Educator be introduced to the Presbytery by one of the Educators serving on the COM or by the chair of the COM or by the Moderator of Leadership Development. The Educator should be welcomed by the Presbytery at a regular stated meeting as a part of the COM report. The Educator should be invited to share a brief statement of their faith journey at that time.
3. Provide a service of recognition for newly Certified Christian Educators to be planned by the Oversight sub-committee of the COM along with the Certification Advisor/s, the Coordinator for Leadership Development and the Moderator of Leadership Development Ministry Team. This service of recognition would be held during a stated meeting of Presbytery [BOO G-11.0103n, G-14.0731)

4. That Christian Educator information be included as a part of the COM Report to Presbytery when changes occur, transfers, or new educators are commissioned by churches into the Presbytery. Annually prepare a status report listing all Christian Educators in the Presbytery. Christian Educators are to be included in all Presbytery mailings and receive Presbytery packets in advance of each stated meeting. The attendance registration process at Presbytery will include Christian Educators as an identifiable group. Christian Educators have the privilege of the floor with voice at all meetings of the Presbytery; but no vote. There shall be two Christian Educators serving as ex-officio members of the COM.
5. That at least annually the policy or similar statement be printed with the Committee on Ministry's Report to Presbytery under the Christian Educator information section in order to encourage churches to consider calling a Christian Educator.
6. All churches are encouraged to provide Pastor Relations Committees (PRC) and Educator Relations Committees (ERC) for pastors and educators. (This action was already approved by Presbytery action on July 20, 1993.)**[Church Professional Relations Committee 11/09]**
7. That individual churches are encouraged to provide a Service of Commissioning for their new Christian Educator and recognize the various certification stages of their Educators in the life, worship, and ministry of the local church. These stages may be reported as information under the Christian Educator Information section of the COM's Report to Presbytery.
8. Upon dismissal of an Educator initiated by a church, the COM highly recommends following a procedure of severance similar to that found in the "Guidelines for Terms of Dissolution" from the Peacemaking Sub-committee of COM. Each session is encouraged to conduct an exit interview when an educator leaves or is dismissed.
9. That the following additional support be provided by the appropriate COM sub-committee:
 - (a) When making triennial visits to sessions, include Christian Educators in the visit, and encourage these educators to seek certification. In this visit, if appropriate, encourage sessions to encourage educators to seek certification and to show that support by making time available for them for continuing education seeking certification and providing the educator with an education allowance for that purpose.
 - (b) Ensure that COM is available to take a role in conflict resolution and participate in or conduct an Educator's exit interview, if necessary, which may include the Coordinator for Leadership Development and/or the Moderator of Leadership Development.
 - (c) Provide access to Christian Educators for consultation in regard to grievances or other communication. (As approved by Charlotte Presbytery on July 20, 1993, BOO G-11.0503)