

WHAT CAN A CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER GRADUATE DO?

A Lay Minister graduate of the Academy is eligible for the certification process by his or her local American Baptist church, after being recommended by the church's Baptist Association. To facilitate this, the graduate's church should make contact with the chairperson of the Association Credentials Committee and arrange for the graduate to present a formal paper stating Christian experience, theological beliefs, and call to American Baptist ministry. He or she also should sign "The Covenant and Code of Ethics" for professional church leaders of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. After the Association Credentials Council recommends them, a certification service can be conducted by the graduate's church. If the local church follows the proper procedures in the certification process, the graduate's certification will be recognized regionally and usually is recognized nationally.

Once Provisional Certification is granted, the Certified Lay Minister must complete 6 units of Continuing Education within 3 years to qualify for permanent Certification. They must also attend and complete the Candidacy Assessment program at the Midwest Career Development Center prior to permanent Certification. After 18 months from the date of Provisional Certification, and if the CEU requirement has been completed, and the assessment has been satisfactorily completed, the Certified Lay Minister may then apply for permanent certification status.

After a graduate is certified, he or she may pastor a church, be an associate, youth, or interim pastor, do supply preaching, and/or generally work in his or her own church in a more educated and experienced way. Opportunity will be given for the Certified Lay Minister to register with the American Baptist Personnel Services. This can facilitate the possibility of being called to a church ministry position, which may include enrollment in Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board programs.

A graduate who is properly certified has the necessary recognition to perform weddings. When authorized by the local church, he or she also may dedicate children, baptize, officiate at the Lord's Supper, and conduct funerals. A Certified Lay Minister usually has the opportunity to do what an ordained person can do.

A person who is not fully ordained should not use "The Reverend" before his or her name. American Baptist national standards for ordination, after which "The Reverend" may be conferred, require three years of seminary or similar education and/or experience. The proper recognition which can be used before the certified person's name is "Lay Minister," "Certified Lay Minister" (CLM), or "Pastor".

Generally, a graduate will be well-equipped to conduct quality ministry in the name of Christ.