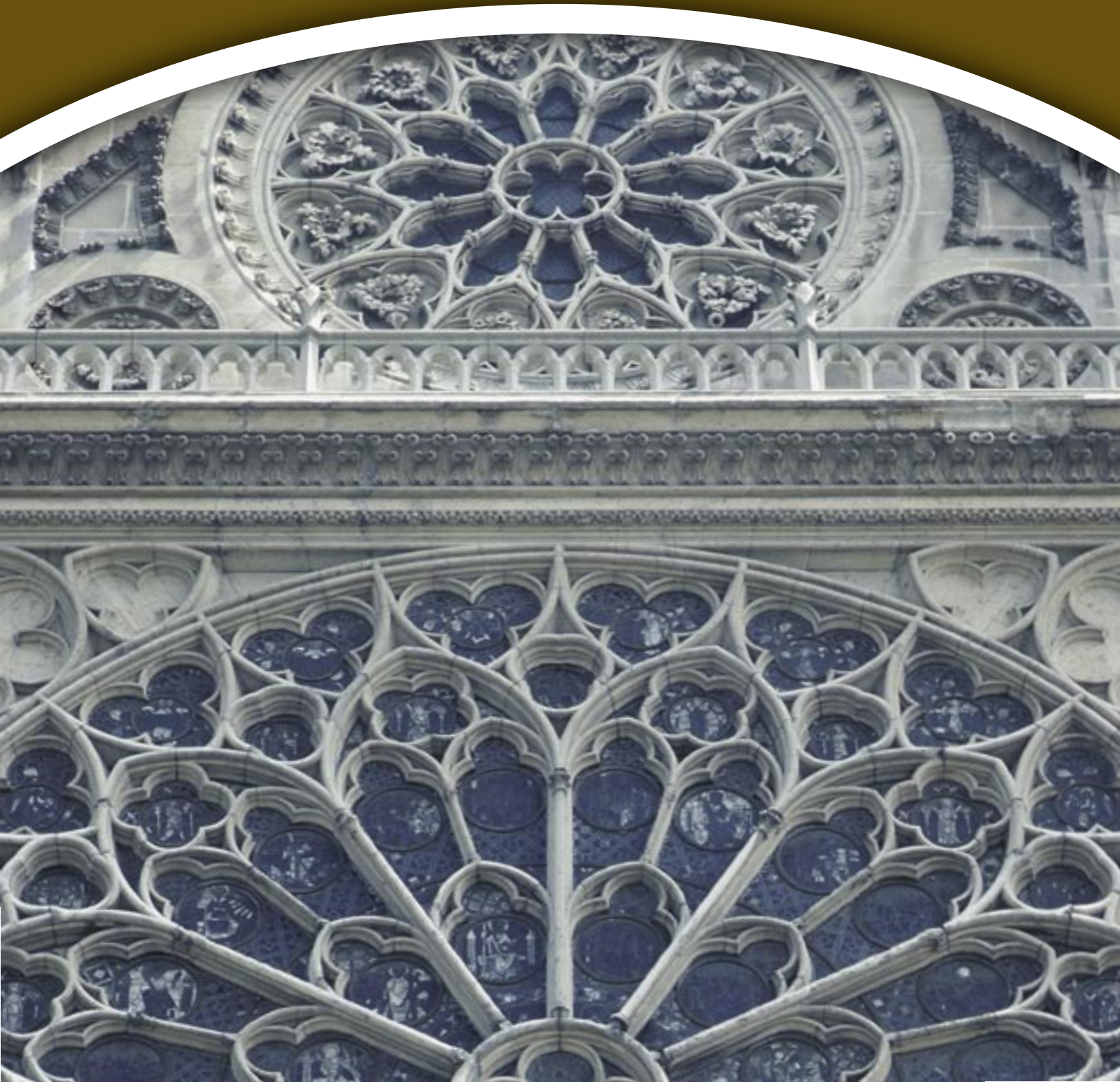


Content of Catechesis





Revelation, Grace, and the Response of Faith: God's Methodology

The true light that enlightens every one was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not... But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God... And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. ~ JOHN 1:9-13, 16

1. Nature of Revelation ➞

That which is necessary for us (Eph 1:9-10)
That which we would not otherwise know (Col 1:25-27;
John 1:9-18)

It is Supernatural, beyond us

2. Content of Revelation ➞

Who God is; what he wants (Ex 3:14; Matt 3:17;
Jer 31:31-34)
His plan (Eph 1:3-10)
Who we are (Luke 1:30-38)
His provision for us (Matt 6:28-30; 10:29-30; Gen 22:9-14)
God through history, "mirabilia Dei" (Acts 7:2-56; Ps 78;
111:2)

It is the Deposit of Faith

3. The delivery of Revelation... ➞

Oral Tradition (2 Thess 2:15)
Written word (Deut 5:22)
Witnesses (John 21:24; Acts 1:8)

It is echoed down to every generation

4. ...is accompanied by Grace ➞

God's help—actual grace (John 14:18; Lam 3:22)
God's own life—sanctifying grace (John 3:1-5; 15:4-5)

It is always accompanied by grace

5. Human Act ➞

Listen ➞ Parable of the Seeds (Matt 13: 1-30)
Consider
Assent
Obey

Our Response of Faith

6. God's Gift ➞

Fed by truth (fides quae) (2 Tim 3:16-17)
Theological virtue (fides qua) (1 Tim 6:20)
Incremental growth to holiness (1 John 4:13-19)
Requirements for salvation (Matt 25:31-46)
Hope set before us (Heb 6:18-20)
Love, the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 6:1-11; Jude 1:20-21)



The Story of Peter: A Biblical Narrative Illustrating God's Methodology

Revelation means “to pull back the veil.” It is God’s method of manifesting a bit of himself, allowing us time to absorb it before he shows a bit more; and the process repeats.

Luke	5:1–11	Peter is called by Jesus
Matt	8:14–15	Jesus cures his mother-in-law
	8:23–27	Witnesses Jesus calming the storm
	13:10–15	Hears the “Secrets” revealed to the apostles
	14:13–21	Watches Jesus feed five thousand
	14:22–33	Walks on water with Jesus
	15:29–31	Sees Jesus healing
	16:13–20	Recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah
	16:21–23	Earns the rebuke “Get behind me Satan”
	17:1–8	Sees Jesus transfigured
	26:26–30	Is present at the Last Supper
	26:69–75	Denies Jesus three times
John	20:1–7	Witnesses the empty tomb
	21:15–17	Gets reconciled with the risen Jesus
	21:18–19	Learns of his eventual martyrdom
Acts	1:15–26	Replaces Judas with Matthias
	2:14–40	Gives the first catechesis
	3:1–10	Heals a lame man
	4:5–15	Is arrested for his preaching
	5:1–11	Confronts deception
	6:1–6	Raises up deacons
	8:14–24	Exercises authority
	10:1–48	Begins ministry to the Gentiles
	12:1–17	Is taken out of prison by an angel
	15:1–11	Presides at circumcision debate in Jerusalem
1 Pt	5:12–13	Writes from Rome



Catechesis: Continuation of the Prophetic Light

WHAT IS REVELATION?

“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.”
(Heb 1:1-2)

It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will. The Divine plan of Revelation is realized simultaneously by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other and shed light on each other. (CCC 51, 53)

WHAT IS CATECHESIS?

“The life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it.” (1 John 1:1-3)

Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God’s Word, so that the whole of a person’s humanity is impregnated by that word. (see CT 20)

WHAT IS THE WORD?

“But when the Counselor comes...he will bear witness to me, and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27)

Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church. (CT 27)

The Word is Jesus Christ, the Word made man and... his voice continues to resound... (GDC 94)

HOW IS IT ADMINISTERED?

“That which was from the beginning...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you...” (1 John 1:1, 4)

The Word of God, by wondrous divine “condescension” is directed toward us and reaches us by means of human deeds and words...And so, without ceasing to be the Word of God, it is expressed in human words. (GDC 94)

Greek: ‘pro’ = for; ‘phet’ = speak ~ means to speak for (God)

The New Testament

What does the New Testament teach regarding the prophetic light and our work?



2 Peter 1:19-20

“And we have the prophetic word made more sure”

1 Corinthians 14:30

“He who prophesies speaks to men for their up-building, encouragement, consolation”

John 6:68

“You have the words of everlasting life”

Matthew 10:40

“He who receives you receives me”

Matthew 5:19

“He who does and teaches [the commandments] shall be called great in the kingdom”

Colossians 4:3-4

“Pray that God may open for us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear”



The Old Testament

What do the Old Testament prophets teach regarding the prophetic light and our work?

MOSES

Deuteronomy 18:15 The promise of an even greater prophet to come
Exodus 4:10-12 God will give the prophet the message

ISAIAH

Isaiah 52:7 The good news is the message (or the means to get it) (same as Nahum 1:15 below)
Isaiah 6:5-9 The prophet must be cleansed of impurities

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 1:6-8; 17 The prophet is not too young
Jeremiah 31:33-34 God will do his part

OTHER PROPHETS

Ezekiel 37:1-14 A prophesy about the dry bones... they shall live!
Daniel 9:3-10; 19 Prophet's prayer concerning the people
Hosea 3:1 Love God's sinful people
Joel 2:28-29 Young men will prophesy
Amos 7:1-6 Prayer of prophet to prophet
Micah 4:1-2 Response of people to prophet
Nahum 1:15 The good news is the message (same as Isaiah 52:7 above)
Habakkuk 3:19 The prophet's strength
Zephaniah 3:18b-20 God's promise of a future after reproach
Haggai 1:12-13 Result of the message: the people responded
Zechariah 13:2-6 What happens to a false prophet
Malachi 3:16-18; 4:1-6 The Lord healed those who responded; remember Moses (the first prophet) — I will send another prophet before the day of the Lord comes!



Faith: How to Get It

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you ~ EPHESIANS 1:16-18

Because the work of catechesis is oriented towards conversion, the catechist needs to understand clearly how a person gets faith, grows in faith, and loses faith.

HOW TO GET FAITH (SEE CCC 153-156, 162)

Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man (CCC 162):

- ✦ The grace to believe is granted to all—God desires all to be saved (see 1 Timothy 2:4)
- ✦ God always initiates and enables belief by his grace—we believe by the authority of God who reveals himself
- ✦ Accepting God's free gift is an act of the will and the intellect—it does not depend upon emotions or feelings
- ✦ This belief does not stem from, but always accords with our reason—faith elevates reason
- ✦ The sacrament of Baptism bestows the power to believe, the theological virtue of faith—faith is an act above what is natural to us

HOW TO GROW IN FAITH (SEE CCC 94, 162)

Faith is certain. It is more certain than all human knowledge because it is founded on the very Word of God (CCC 157):

- ✦ Nourish it with the Word of God (Scripture) and with the works of God (charity)
- ✦ Participate in contemplation, study, and prayer with other believers
- ✦ Live with a steadfast hope of God's love, his mercy, and of Heaven.
- ✦ Root ourselves in the faith of the Church, listen to the voice of those who have the 'sure charism of truth'
- ✦ Beg the Lord to increase our faith

HOW TO LOSE FAITH (SEE CCC 164, 2087-2088)

Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test (CCC 164):

- ⊕ Continue in the company of non-believers or those who are spiritually lazy
- ⊕ Nurture an unhealthy fascination with evil, suffering, injustice, and death
- ⊕ Spurn the commandments and the precepts of the Church
- ⊕ Cultivate doubt by disregarding revealed truths or fostering objections and anxiety due to some obscurity
- ⊕ Fail to seek to know God in the Scriptures, in the life of the Church, and through prayer

FAITH AS AN ACT

The human act of responding to God's gift

- ✦ Listen
- ✦ Consider
- ✦ Assent
- ✦ Obey



FAITH AS A VIRTUE

God's gift nurtured by God's grace

- ✦ Fed by truth, that which we believe
- ✦ Theological virtue, by which we believe
- ✦ Incremental growth in holiness (sacramental life)
- ✦ Seeking understanding (continual study)

Elements of Catechesis ~ Methodology



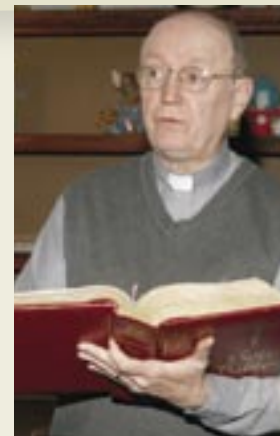
Catechetical Methodology: Catechesis that Changes Hearts

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. ~ 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-2

FIRST STEP: PREPARATION

Here are some of the principal elements of this first step:

- ⊕ Your relationship with the catechumens and candidates.
(St. John Bosco said, “Get them to love you and they’ll follow you anywhere!”)
- ⊕ Your arrangement of the environment is to be hospitable and attractive.
(St. Augustine warned not to let them be too cold or too hot because they will sleep or be distracted!)
- ⊕ Your readiness for them when they arrive—knowing their names, not being preoccupied.
- ⊕ A “sacred space” ready as a focal point for prayer and attention.
- ⊕ Your carefully prepared opening prayer, hymn, and perhaps Liturgy of the Word.
- ⊕ Your sincere love of teaching them.



The purpose of this step is to create the conditions for the deepening of God’s Word in the participant’s hearts. This preparation should help them disengage from other preoccupations and remember how good it is to come to the sessions! (With a group you are just getting to know this could take several weeks.)

SECOND STEP: PROCLAMATION

- ✂ Your announcement of the truth to be examined, explained, and assimilated comes like that of a herald, boldly and clearly stated but not intended as a confrontation. It is somewhat akin to rolling a very interesting object into the midst of a curious crowd.
 - ✝ *For a group of adults or older teenagers, a proclamation about Mary might sound like this:*
“Tonight we will discuss Mary, the Mother of Jesus. From all eternity God intended to employ the help of a human being to accomplish the Incarnation. That woman was Mary of Nazareth. By her agreement with the Divine plan, and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, she became the Mother of God.”
 - ✝ *For young children it might be:*
“Today you’re going to get to learn more about Mary, the Mother of Jesus. God always wanted to ask someone to help bring Jesus to us. He wanted it to be a mother, and a very special one. He asked Mary, who lived in Nazareth. She said yes to be the Mother of God, and then later God gave her to us to be our Mother, too.”



- ✂ The purpose of this step is to clearly proclaim the truth to be taught. It does not take long at all, but following a well-crafted proclamation, everything else follows more clearly.
- ✂ It’s like saying, “This is what we are doing tonight.” When catechumens and candidates go home, they know what they learned! Therefore, the announcement must not be ambiguous, delivered defensively, or phrased as an apology.
- ✂ **This is the central step of the method.**
All of the other steps should relate to this one.

THIRD STEP: EXPLANATION

- ✧ Your proclamation signals the opportunity to examine this “good news” which you have just presented to the catechumens and candidates.
- ✧ In addition to presenting catechesis in a straightforward manner, you can get creative to draw the catechumens and candidates in:
 - ✦ *Do some apologetics if appropriate.*
 - ✦ *Share your testimony, or a relevant aspect of it.*
 - ✦ *Show and discuss various sacred art renderings of the Annunciation event and the Crucifixion with Mary at the foot of the cross.*
 - ✦ *Study a prayer (such as the Hail Mary) that is new to the participants.*
 - ✦ *Suggest that participants memorize or look up Scripture verses pertinent to this truth.*
- ✧ This is the step in which participants’ questions and doubts need to be honestly addressed. Some questions or concerns may be handled in the small group time, but the explanation portion of a session must communicate an openness to dialogue and questions.
- ✧ The goal of the explanation is that, even if the truth reaches to the heights of transcendence, it remains clearly practical and reasonable. The explanation of a given truth of the faith should not insult intelligence, rather it informs life experience and inspires fidelity to the God who reveals such wonderful things.



FOURTH STEP: APPLICATION

Now you begin to address what this truth means for the catechumens and candidates.

- ⊕ Break into small groups to examine the ramifications of this truth.
- ⊕ A catechumen or candidate might be led (by grace) to think:
“If Mary is the Mother of God, and I see that she is, I wonder how Jesus wants me to relate to her in my life?”
- ⊕ In helping them to apply this insight to their lives you might invite them to compare biological motherhood with spiritual motherhood. Or you might encourage them to create a simple Marian shrine in some room of their home.
- ⊕ The result is that they might say, *“You’ve given me a lot to think about.”*
- ⊕ This step intends to help the truths learned and revealed in the earlier steps bear fruit. The application portion of a session should also be focused to enlighten the catechumens’ and candidates’ experience, or intimation, of the truth discussed in that session. For example, providing encouragement to and knowledge about a catechumen’s or candidate’s growing desire to love Mary; or providing persuasive reasons to gradually end a long-term resistance to any real relationship with her.

FIFTH STEP: CELEBRATION

- ✧ To conclude an RCIA session, it is helpful to give the catechumens and candidates a way to respond to the grace that God was giving them while they investigated his truth in the explanation and application time of the session.
- ✧ A session on Mary might end by encouraging participants to give thanks and praise, or to pray to her for themselves or others. For example: praying the Litany of Loretto or the Memorare; processing to the parish Marian shrine; teaching them how to pray the rosary so that they might do so for a person they’re worried about; or simply asking Mary to help them come closer to her Son.

“The Ecclesial Method” is taken from *The Mystery We Proclaim* by Msgr. Francis Kelly (Our Sunday Visitor Books, 1999).





Tips on Methodology in General

KEEP THE CONTEXT FOR THIS LESSON IN MIND

- ✧ Your methodology should be determined by your knowledge of the participants, your objectives for this session, and the content you will be presenting.
- ✧ Plan to look at the sessions coming up and note the order of teachings, decide what you want to do about feast days, see if there is an activity that would help get some aspect of the teaching across, but will need advance planning.

HAVE OBJECTIVES;

MAKE YOURSELF WRITE THEM AND FOLLOW THEM

- ⊕ Setting realistic goals, one for the “understanding” aim, and one for the “change” aim of CT 20, will help you. Participants will notice that you are getting somewhere (they don’t need to know the objectives/goals, they will be able to tell that progress is being made).
- ⊕ A deadly factor in once-a-week sessions is that they just seem to plod along, it is hard to see progress unless you plan progress.

HAVE STORIES READY!

ALWAYS BE LOOKING FOR STORIES AND COLLECT THEM

- ✦ Everyone loves a good story, jot down the main points and keep them with your session planning materials.
- ✦ Stories of your life, not embellished, are very helpful because you reveal yourself—you don’t want to be just “that teacher.” Reveal aspects of your love for God and the Church, witness to them regularly.
- ✦ Using stories right from the news, the parish, or the neighborhood gives you a chance to shine the light of God’s love on the participants’ daily experiences.
- ✦ Lives of saints and holy people are always useful, but make sure you portray them as real and believable—St. Teresa of Avila said there is nothing worse than a “sad” saint!
- ✦ Anthologies and digests are good sources, practice the telling of the story, keeping it concise and interesting.

DO NOT READ TO THEM (EXCEPT STORIES OR SCRIPTURE)

- ⌘ Only for those two mediums will anyone stay attentive to reading more than a one-line quotation.
- ⌘ Even though you come across a great quote, even something from the *Catechism*, don’t read it to them if it is somewhat lengthy. Paraphrase it instead—unless they have the same source and can read along.

Suggested Format for an RCIA Teaching

Preparation

Arrangement of environment and sacred space for this doctrine:

Opening prayer for this doctrine:

Music for this doctrine:

Proclamation

What is the statement of truth to ring in their ears?

What Scripture(s) will drive this?

Explanation

What essential truths will be explained in the form of a handout?

What aspects of this doctrine will be drawn out verbally?

Application

What does this mean for them?

Remember the adult learning model.

Celebration

How can we thank God and acclaim his wonderful truth together?

Remember to:

Samples Basic Outlines for RCIA Sessions on Three Doctrines

Preparation

Choose elements for Liturgy of the Word (readings and psalm) related to the doctrine.

Choose prayers and hymns appropriate to the doctrine.

Proclamation

Incarnation: In order to accomplish all his saving purposes for us, the Second Person of the Trinity assumed human nature. (see CCC 457-460) (Scriptures: John 3:16,17; Col 1:15-19; 1 John 1:14,16,18—draw these through the rest of the teaching)

Creation: Out of love, according to his incredible plan and purposes, God, who himself has no beginning or end, made out of nothing all that has a beginning. (Scriptures: Gen 1:1,27,31; Acts 17:24-28—creation is “very good”; ex nihilo)

Scripture: In order to make absolutely clear to us his saving work, God has communicated himself and his plan to us in human words. (Ps 119; Eph 6:17; 1 Tim 3:15; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12—work through the Biblical citations to demonstrate this truth)

Explanation

Incarnation: 1) Give a handout on the four reasons for Incarnation and briefly explain them (see CCC 457-460)

2) Explain the concept of “true God and true man” (see CCC 464-469)

3) Explain how this is possible (Col 1:18-19; CCC 470-477), which includes the common error of the consciousness of Christ

Creation: 1) Give a handout on our participation in his creative work (Col 1:17)

2) Give a handout on Providence, including the scandal of evil (see CCC 301-314)

3) Explain creation “out of nothing” (see CCC 296-298)

4) Explain “in his image” (see CCC 356-361, 1878, 2331)

5) Explain that it was love that impelled God to create (see CCC 293-299)

6) Explain the plan of God’s loving goodness (see CCC 1, 280)

Scripture: 1) Give a handout on Scripture passages about Scripture

2) Explain the Christo-centricity of Scripture (see CCC 102)

3) Explain the role of human authors in writing Scripture (see CCC 106)

4) Explain the role of magisterium in identifying/guarding Scripture (see CCC 85)

5) Explain Divine authorship (CCC 105)

Application

Incarnation: Explain the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (see CCC 428, as well as margin numbers)

- Creation:**
- 1) Explain in Scripture the redemption of Creation: “All Creation waits in eager longing...” (Rom 8:18-23)
 - 2) Give examples of the practice of stewardship over Creation (Gen 1:26; CCC 2415)
 - 3) Expound on the statement: “The world was created for the sake of the Church” (CCC 760)

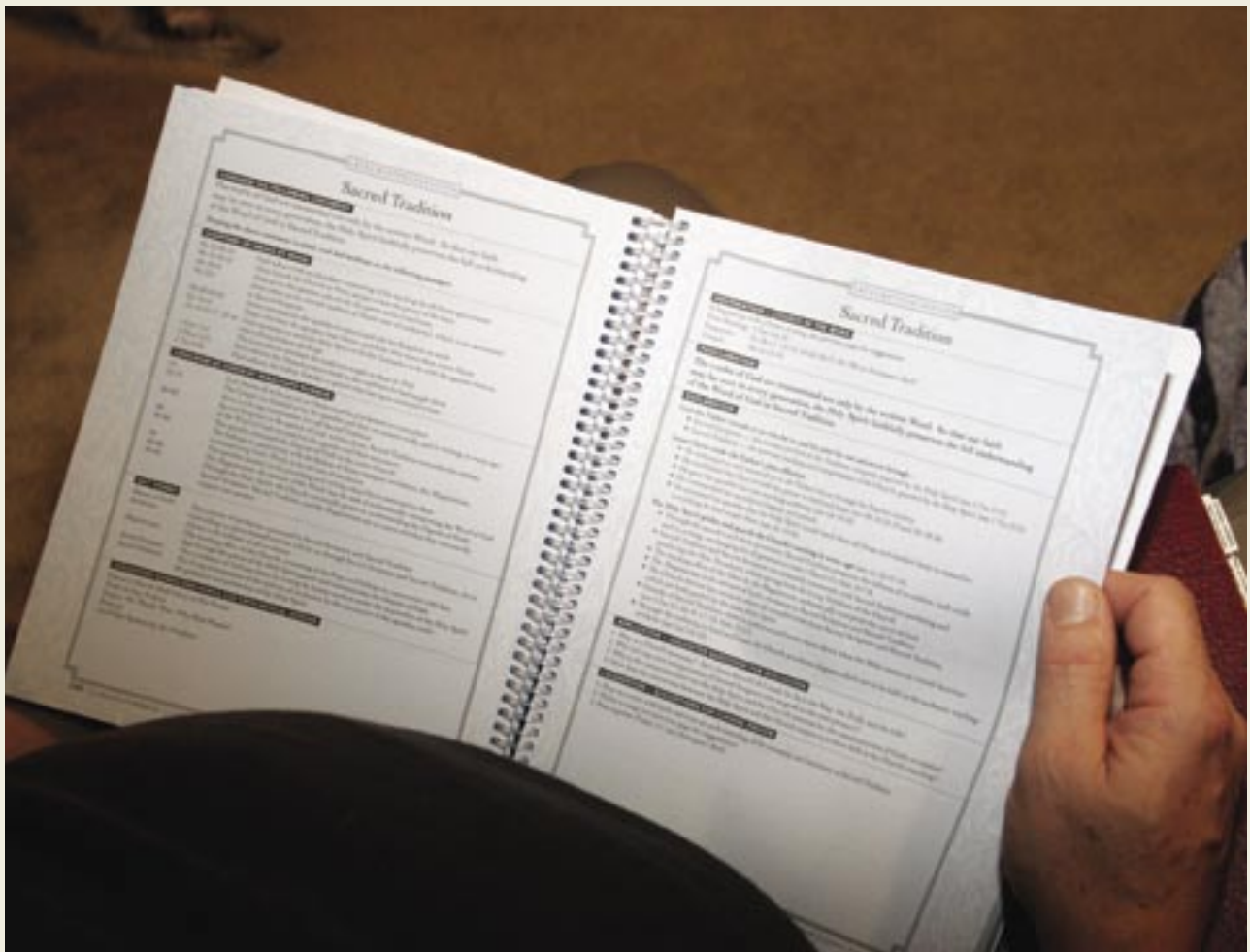
- Scripture:**
- 1) Show the use of the senses of Scripture (CCC 115)
 - 2) Give witness to the power of Scripture in *your* life (2 Tim 3:15)

Celebration

Incarnation: Pray the Litany of the Sacred Heart together

Creation: Pray or sing Psalm 148 together

Scripture: Teach and then sing “Thy Word” song (by Amy Grant)



Forming Faith for Life: The Catechesis of Adults

Adult Catechesis “must give priority to the proclamation of salvation, drawing attention to the many difficulties, doubts, misunderstandings, prejudices and objections of today. It must introduce adults to a faith-filled reading of Sacred Scripture and the practice of prayer.” (GDC 175, SEE ALSO 171-174)

Christians are to be in the World, Not of the World

There must be recognition of the “secular character which is proper and peculiar to the laity.” (ACCC 27)

- ✧ Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media (EN 70)
- ✧ It also includes other realities, which are open to evangelization such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering (EN 70)
- ✧ The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often repressed and buried, the more these realities will be at the service of the Kingdom of God and therefore at the service of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension which is often disregarded (EN 70)

The Ultimate and Unifying Goals of Adult Catechesis...

...is to help the mature Christian to live as an adult by acquiring certain qualities... (ACCC 36-38)

- ✝ Attitude of conversion to the Lord (ACCC 36)
 - ⊕ Promotes an openness of heart to the mystery of the Lord's greatness and grace by encouraging sincere reconciliation with the Lord and one another
 - ⊕ Practices discipleship of Jesus by means of a life aimed at being like him (see Mark 1:15, CT 20)
- ✝ Service and fellowship in the Christian community (ACCC 35, 37)
 - ⊕ Encourages them to live the gift and choice of faith through membership in the Christian community
 - ⊕ Explains and establishes their co-responsibility for the community's mission and internal life (see Acts 2:42)
- ✝ Christian discipleship in the world (ACCC 38)
 - ⊕ Draws others into a life of faith-working-in-love (see Gal. 5:6)
 - ⊕ Provides reasons for the hope that is in us (see 1 Pet 3:15)
 - ⊕ Takes effective steps in favor of the transformation of family, social, and professional life in light of the Gospel
 - ⊕ Seeks harmonious and vital synthesis of the essential characteristics of the Christian life





Ten Principles of Adult Catechesis

The *contents* of adult catechesis are offered to men and women of every social and cultural background as the nourishing and satisfying bread of life so that, filled with Divine wisdom, they might radiate this wisdom in all areas of life (ACCC 47):

- 1) Get to *know them*. One must begin by accepting adults “where they are”, keeping in mind “the specific adults with whom one is working, their cultural background, human and religious needs, their expectations, faith experiences, and their potential” (ACCC 56)
- 2) Ensure that the *great themes of Christianity* are clear, as well as how they can *participate* and *respond* to these truths.
- 3) Provide *experiences of the Christian community* to reinforce concepts. The communitarian dimension of the contents of faith will be thoroughly developed...to know and experience the “mystery of the Church”...incarnate in a particular community (ACCC 53)
- 4) Incorporate *prayer* and opportunities for *service*
- 5) Say it so they *hear it*—find ways to break through. This enables them to become gradually more aware of *their value and dignity as human beings*, as a result of a careful and stimulating exposition of the great truths of faith (ACCC 49)
- 6) *Expect and encourage questions*. A meaningful faith response will be biblical, reasonable and attentive to signs of the times (see ACCC 48)
- 7) Help them respond to you and to God. Catechesis of adults seeks to provide formation *in a spirituality suitable for the Christian laity*... Special attention should be reserved for teaching adults how to pray (ACCC 50)
- 8) Prepare them to *share their faith*, not just remain recipients (ACCC 51, 52)
- 9) Assist them in *living in the Church* in relevant and practical ways
- 10) Count on the *power of God* as dynamic and ever present

Methodological Considerations for Adults:

- 1) Create a *friendly and dialogical* rapport so that they can make known their needs and can participate... as subjects or agents in their own catechesis (ACCC 54, 57)
- 2) Imbue all catechesis with a clear, *personal witness* to the Christian life (see ACCC 58)
- 3) Focus on expressing truths of the faith in practical and convincing ways. Knowledge and facts should not have to be ‘stored-up’, but should be *immediately applicable* to their lives and personal struggles (see ACCC 58)
- 4) Present truths of the faith as *certitudes* (see ACCC 58)
- 5) Ensure that catechesis has an *obvious, organic and systematic development*, and is not merely episodic or random. Connections between doctrines must be clear and deliberate at all stages (ACCC 59)
- 6) Take advantage of the *diversity of means and instruments for imparting knowledge* of the faith and for maintaining communion in the faith. Don’t just lecture or talk (see ACCC 64, 65)
- 7) Look to *create links* between their experience of the local community, their participation in the liturgy, their charitable service, and their awareness of the Church’s life beyond the parish (see ACCC 59)

Entering the Heart of the Church: Learning to Pray the Liturgy of the Hours

Based on Shorter Christian Prayer (SCP)

MORNING PRAYER (WITH INVITATORY)

The **Invitatory** is normally prayed prior to first hour of the day.

If the Invitatory will not be prayed with Morning Prayer, begin Morning Prayer with #1, pray the “**Glorify...**” as in #4 and then continue with #6 and following.

1. **Stand** and begin by making the **sign of the cross** while praying:
(Leader): “**Lord, open my lips,**” (Response): “**And my mouth will proclaim your praise.**”
2. Leader prays the **Invitatory Antiphon**.
In **SCP** the Invitatory Antiphons begin on page 18.
3. Pray the **Invitatory Psalm**.
In **SCP** the Invitatory Psalm is found on page 22.
When more than one person is praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the psalms and canticles may be prayed in “chorus.” One side of the room prays the first stanza and then the sides alternate until the psalm or canticle is complete.
4. Pray the “**Glorify...**” at the conclusion of the *Invitatory Psalm*.
Unless otherwise indicated, the “Glorify...” is prayed at the end of each psalm or canticle, and can also be prayed in two parts with the alternating side finishing with: “As it was in the beginning...”
5. Conclude the *Invitatory* by praying together the **Invitatory Antiphon**.
6. Begin Morning Prayer with a **hymn**.
In **SCP** the hymns are listed by number and begin on page 583.
If the Invitatory is not prayed prior to Morning Prayer, begin by standing and making the sign of the cross while praying:
(Leader): “**God, come to my assistance,**” (Response): “**Lord, make haste to help me.**”
(Leader): “**Glorify to the Father...**” (Response): “**As it was in the beginning...**”
Then the **hymn** is sung, and prayer proceeds as follows:
7. Leader prays **Antiphon 1** (*you may be seated as the psalm begins*).
In **SCP** the Antiphons will normally precede the psalms for the day in the Four Week Psalter which begins on page 37.
8. Pray the first **Psalm** (alternating sides with each stanza if more than one person is praying).
9. Pray the “**Glorify...**” at the end of the psalm.
10. Leader prays the **psalm-prayer**. (There will not be a psalm-prayer following a canticle).
11. All pray **Antiphon 1** together.
12. Pray the second and third **psalm/canticle** in the same way, beginning with the leader praying **Antiphon 2** [3].
13. Leader (or another person) proclaims the **Scripture reading**.
In **SCP** the reading is normally found in the **Proper of Seasons** beginning on page 355.
(An appropriate period of silent reflection follows).





14. Pray the **Responsory**.
Leader prays the first line. Everyone else responds with the text following the red dash.
Note that though the leader begins the “Glory be...” in the usual way, the second half of this prayer is not prayed, rather all respond with the first response of the Responsory.
15. **Stand:** Leader prays the **Antiphon for the Gospel Canticle** (of Zechariah).
16. Make the **sign of the cross** as you pray together the **Gospel Canticle** (of Zechariah, also known as the “**Benedictus**”).
In **SCP** the “Benedictus” is found on page 27, and also on the **inside front cover**.
Conclude the Gospel Canticle by praying the “Glory...”
17. All pray together the **Antiphon for the Gospel Canticle** (of Zechariah).
18. Pray the **Intercessions**.
Leader begins. Everyone else responds with the text following the red dash.
(If time and circumstances permit, leader may invite other intercessions at this time).
19. Leader introduces the “Our Father” with the following (or similar) invitation:
“**Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught us...**”
In **SCP**, other invitations to the “Our Father” begin on Page 28.
20. All pray together the “**Our Father...**”
21. Leader prays the **Concluding Prayer**.
22. If a priest or deacon leads prayer, or if there is one present, he can give his **blessing** to conclude the prayer.
Otherwise all pray together while making the **sign of the cross**:
“**May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.**”
In **SCP**, this prayer is found on page 30.

EVENING PRAYER follows a similar format except that unless it is the first hour that is prayed, it does not begin with the Invitatory. Rather, **standing** begin with the **sign of the cross** while praying:

(Leader): “**God, come to my assistance,**” (Response): “**Lord, make haste to help me.**”

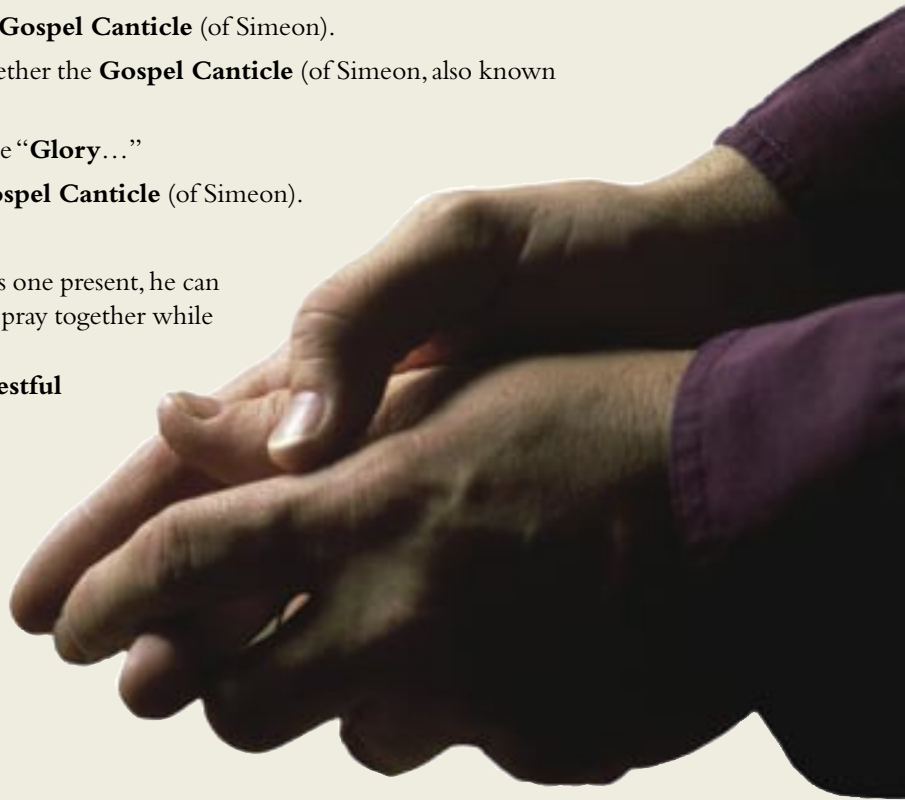
(Leader): “**Glory to the Father...**” (Response): “**As it was in the beginning...**”

Then the **hymn** is sung and prayer proceeds as in #7 above.

The **Gospel Canticle** (of Mary, also known as the “**Magnificat**”) is prayed, beginning with the sign of the cross, during Evening Prayer. In **SCP**, the “**Magnificat**” is found on page 31, as well as on the **inside back cover**.

NIGHT PRAYER is shorter and has a slightly different format than Morning and Evening Prayer. There is a Night Prayer for each day of the week which does not change from week to week. In **SCP** Night Prayer begins on page 330.

1. **Stand** and begin with the **sign of the cross** while praying:
(Leader): “**God, come to my assistance,**” (Response): “**Lord, make haste to help me.**”
(Leader): “**Glorify to the Father...**” (Response): “**As it was in the beginning...**”
2. A brief **Examination of Conscience** may be made and concluded with either:
the “**Confiteor**” (“I confess to almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters...”), or an “**Act of Contrition**”
(O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you...”).
3. Sing a **hymn**.
In **SCP** the hymns are listed by number and begin on page 583.
4. Leader prays the **Psalm Antiphon** (you may **be seated** as the psalm begins).
5. Pray the **psalm** (alternating sides with each stanza if more than one person is praying).
6. Pray the “**Glorify...**” at the end of the psalm.
7. All pray the **Psalm Antiphon** together.
8. Leader (or another person) proclaims the **Scripture reading** (an appropriate period of silent reflection follows).
9. Pray the **Responsory**.
Leader prays the first line. Everyone else responds with the text following the red dash.
Note that though the leader begins the “Glorify...” in the usual way, the second half of this prayer is not prayed, rather all respond with the first response of the Responsory.
10. **Stand**: Leader prays the **Antiphon for the Gospel Canticle** (of Simeon).
11. Make the **sign of the cross** as you pray together the **Gospel Canticle** (of Simeon, also known as the “**Nunc Dimittis**”).
12. Conclude the Gospel Canticle by praying the “**Glorify...**”
13. All pray together the **Antiphon for the Gospel Canticle** (of Simeon).
14. Leader prays the **Concluding Prayer**.
15. If a priest or deacon leads prayer, or if there is one present, he can give his **blessing** at this time. Otherwise all pray together while making the **sign of the cross**:
“**May the all-powerful Lord grant us a restful night and a peaceful death. Amen.**”
16. Night Prayer concludes with all praying together an **Antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary**.
In **SCP** Antiphons in Honor of the Blessed Virgin begin on page 352.



Elements of Catechesis ~ Content



Liturgical Catechesis: The Ministry of the Word at the Service of the Life of Grace

The Church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious, and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood. For this reason, catechesis, along with promoting a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, must also educate the disciples of Jesus Christ for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for community spirit, for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds, as all of this is necessary for a true liturgical life. (GDC 85)

The Christian initiation process is intended to be fundamentally liturgical.

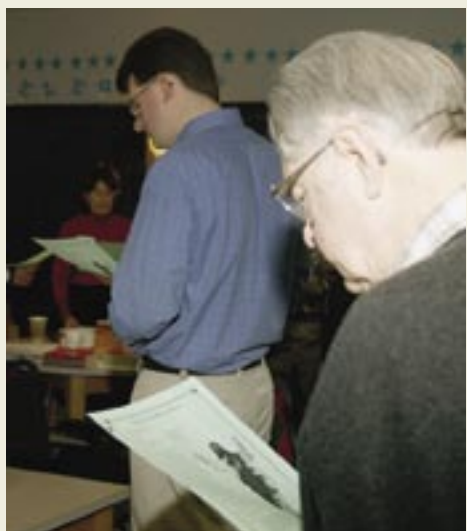
Participants need and have a right to the grace that flows from the font of the Church's liturgy as it is made available to them as catechumens and candidates prior to full communion. This grace is an indispensable aid to conversion, and the means by which they enter into intimate union with Christ and his Church. Liturgical catechesis in the context of Christian initiation can be done in the following ways...

Pray

Always start teaching within the context of prayer. Never let it be routine but planned to “disengage” the participant from a sole focus on this life and put him or her into an awareness of the presence of God. Do not contrive prayer and do not “teach” in a prayer. (We teach people how to pray first by inviting them to be with us, to watch and to pray. We teach about prayer many times in the conversion process.) Pray from your heart and invite them to do the same. “When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit.” (GDC 85)

Celebrate Liturgies of the Word

As the conversion process progresses, catechesis ought to regularly be delivered in the context of a Celebration of the Word (Liturgy of the Word). (see RCIA 82.1) **This is a real liturgy, so it is a direct meeting between God and his people.** Do not be casual with it and do not take it for granted. The focal point should be a sacred space with a Bible displayed and ready to be used. It must include only readings from Scripture (read as a proclamation by fully-initiated Catholics who have prepared for it). There should be a first reading from the Old or New Testament, not from a Gospel. As a liturgical function it must include a responsorial opportunity for the people; this follows the first reading and should be led by someone who has prepared for it. Then there must be a reading from one of the Gospels, preceded by an acclamation. A deacon or priest must read the Gospel if one is present; if not, the chief catechist may read it. All reading must be done from the sacred space with the reader standing. The participants should be instructed to use proper liturgical gestures and responses, sitting for the first reading, standing for the Gospel, use of the three-fold signing with the cross, bowing at the Doxology, the responsorial “Thanks be to God,” etc. The catechesis follows. The Scriptures that are used are those that will “drive” the lesson, not necessarily those from the Sunday Lectionary, unless the RCIA guidelines imply that this would suit the catechetical goals and systematic demands of a given period of the RCIA process (this implication is given for catechesis in the Lenten and in the mystagogy time periods).





Celebrate the Rites and Introduce Sacramentals

After the Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming, participants (depending on their baptismal status) have a right to blessings, minor exorcisms, and anointings. Do not omit these. **These offerings of Holy Mother Church are sacramentals, and so are occasions of grace and encounters with Christ.** (see RCIA 94, 97, 102, 203) They should be administered by a deacon or priest if one is present. If not, the chief catechist can do blessings and minor exorcisms, if allowed and deputed by the diocesan bishop. Each catechetical session is enriched in the encounter with Christ by the use of these sacramentals.

Look for Opportunities for Liturgical Prayer

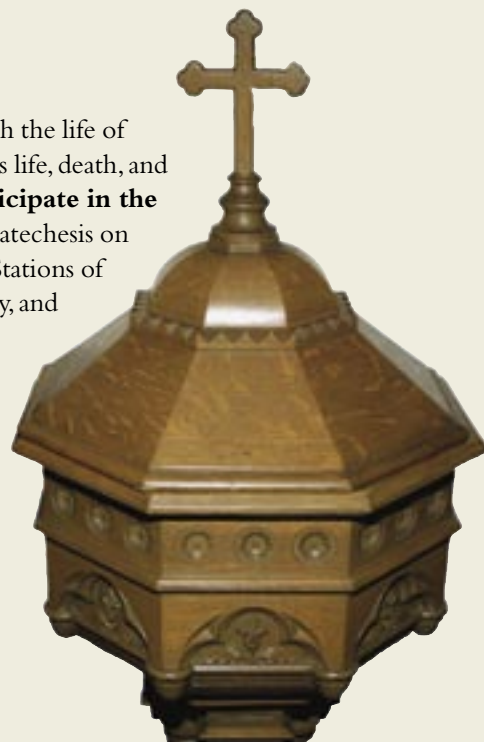
Gradually other sacramentals should be introduced, always accompanied by the proper catechesis, being careful to connect them to the sacraments: for example, blessing and distribution of holy water with instructions for use in anticipation of or in light of Baptism. The blessing and use of an Advent wreath can be added to the Liturgy of the Word. **As the conversion process progresses, more time ought to be spent in prayer.** Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, preceded by explanation and instruction, can be a fitting addition when catechesis on the Eucharist is given. Praying the Scriptural rosary, including intercessions for the needs of the group, is a good accompaniment to instruction on Mary's role in the Church.

Observe the Liturgical Year

The primary purpose of the Liturgical Year is to invite the faithful to walk through the life of Christ each year, and thereby to more fully participate in the saving events that his life, death, and resurrection makes possible for us. **Every opportunity to celebrate and participate in the Liturgical Year ought to be used.** For example: marking a major feast with catechesis on its meaning; special days for the patronal feast of the parish or local ethnic feasts; Stations of the Cross in Lent; penitential prayers and fasting should be explained as they apply, and catechumens and candidates should be invited to participate.

Prepare for Purification and Enlightenment

At the time of the Rites of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion, a shift should happen as the actual catechesis gets shorter and the prayer time lengthens. **Lent is a time of retreat and prayer for those preparing for the sacraments.** The Prayer of the Church (Liturgy of the Hours) might be used here, and possibly Lectio Divina (an ancient form of meditative prayer using Scripture). The special minor Rites of this period should be preceded by catechesis and group prayer, and perhaps followed by time for guided reflection.



Teach to and Teach from the Rites

Always teach to and from the Rites. Study the theme of a given Rite and note the doctrine present in the prayers and responses. **The Church prays what she believes.**

Make sure that your teaching clarifies what participants will hear and how they will be asked to respond in the encounters with Christ and his Church in the liturgy. This is teaching to the Rites. As well, draw from the grace they received from each Rite by referring to those truths as they are appropriate in the weeks and months afterwards. This is teaching from the Rites. All of the Rites draw their power from the sacraments of initiation, and from the ordination of the priests who administer them. Each instruction ought to reflect this reality. Grace is more and more richly available after each one of the Rites, until it is poured out in abundance at the Easter Vigil!



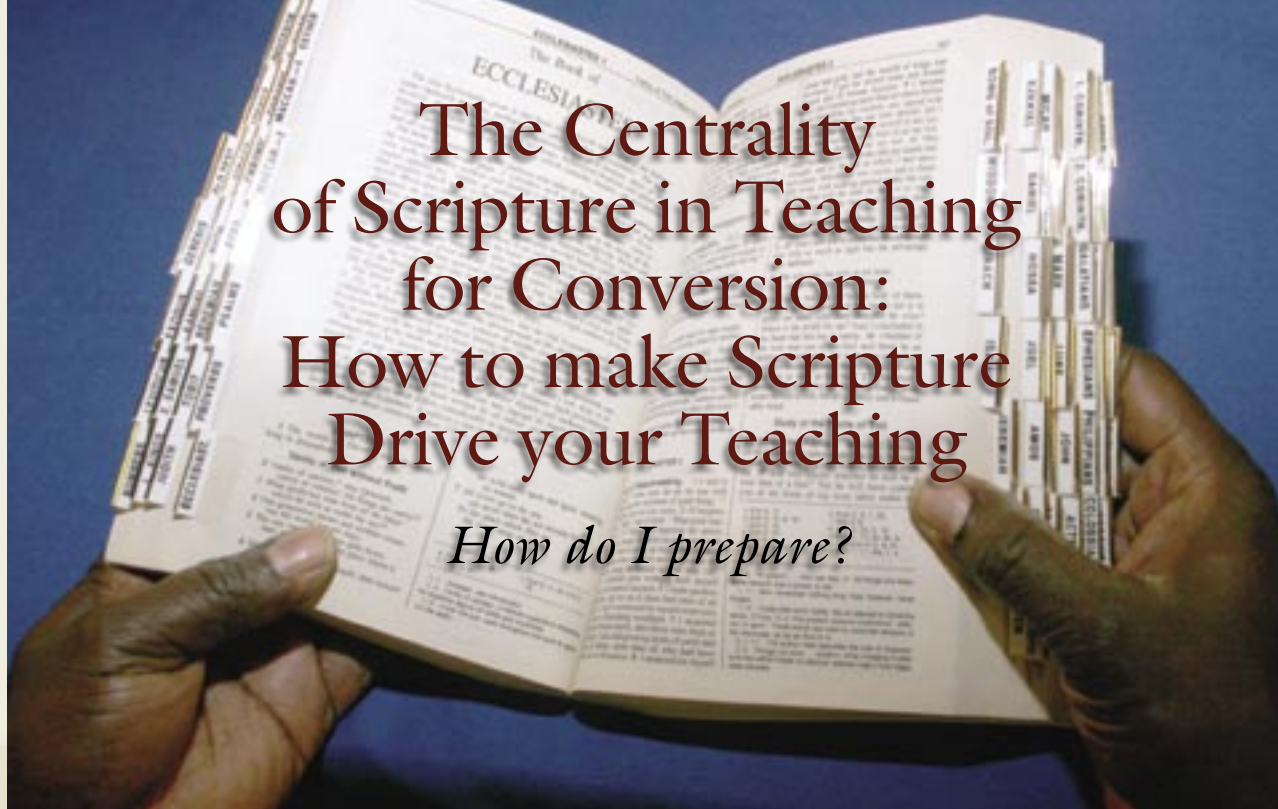
Close the “Liturgical Envelope”

Close each catechetical session by closing the “liturgical envelope.” Do not neglect or rush through a final prayer time. **Plan prayer times to reflect the catechesis.** For example, the Litany of the Sacred Heart after a session on Jesus. Special prayers, hymns, and readings often effectively and beautifully communicate doctrinal truths. Use them as the Church does, to celebrate and apply those truths.

Allow Christ to Work Through the Liturgy

Becoming a member of the Church who is capable of fully and actively engaging in liturgy requires experience, accompanied by rich catechesis and the opportunity to watch and learn. The catechetical and pastoral aspects of the RCIA process are always at the service of the liturgical aspects. **The liturgy teaches and forms on its own as well.** The liturgy must be allowed to do so in the ways appropriate to it. Do not try to alter or manipulate Rites and ceremonies.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church, of which I became a minister according to the Divine office which was given to me for you, to make the Word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ~ COLOSSIANS 1:24-27



The Centrality of Scripture in Teaching for Conversion: How to make Scripture Drive your Teaching

How do I prepare?

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching" ~ 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

"The Word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two edged sword" ~ HEBREWS 4:12

PRAY: IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO DIALOGUE WITH GOD...

- ⊕ Ask God to open his Word to your understanding
- ⊕ Pray that those you teach will encounter God through your instruction

"Let them remember...that prayer should accompany the reading of sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For, 'we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the Divine oracles.'" (DV 25)

STUDY: THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND FOOTNOTES...

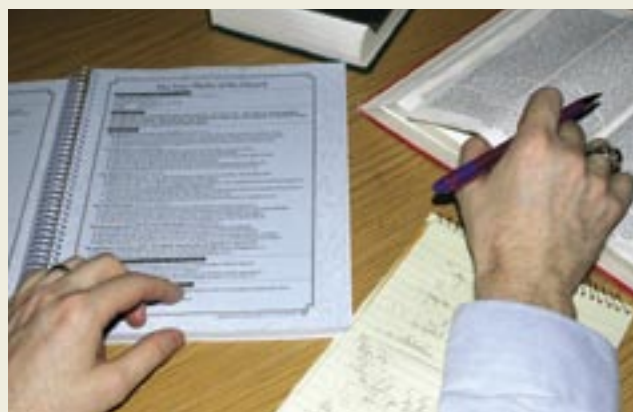
- ✝ Read all the Scriptural references for a particular topic
- ✝ Make use of a concordance, commentaries, and apologetic texts

"Biblical references are a valuable working-tool in catechesis." (CCC 19, see also CCC 11)

READ: SCRIPTURE...

- ✂ Immerse yourself in God's Word
- ✂ Be open to new insight
- ✂ Allow God to dictate the content
of your presentation through his Word

"Therefore, all clerics...and others who, as deacons or catechists, are officially engaged in the ministry of the Word, should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant reading and diligent study." (DV 25)



How do I present this?



CONSIDER: THOSE YOU TEACH...

- Address their Scriptural needs, based on what degree of knowledge they may already have on your teaching
- Assess what Scriptural passages will be needed for doing any apologetics during the teaching, for inspiring participants to prayer, and for producing a desire to read further in God's Word on that subject

"Methods must be adapted to the age, culture, and aptitude of the persons concerned." (EN 44)

SELECT: THE SCRIPTURAL DRIVING FORCE OF THE DOCTRINE...

- ✎ Decide which passages most effectively unlock a deeper meaning of that doctrine for them
- ✎ Be sure not to focus too much on the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old Testament

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

PREPARE: YOUR PRESENTATION...

- ⊕ Read the *Catechism* on the subject of your catechesis
- ⊕ Decide where the Scriptures will be placed in your catechesis

"Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." (Exodus 4:12)

TEACH: THE TRUTHS GOD HAS REVEALED...

- ✎ Read from the Bible as you teach
- ✎ Use Scripture-speak: use God's Word to phrase the truth
- ✎ Have them follow along in their Bibles
- ✎ Provide materials with the Scriptures clearly cited
- ✎ Suggest meditation on the key Scriptures

"Reflect on the statutes of the Lord, and meditate at all times on his commandments. It is he who will give insight to your mind, and your desire for wisdom will be granted." (Sirach 6:37)

"Catechesis must be impregnated and penetrated by the thought, the spirit, and the outlook of the Bible and the Gospels through assiduous contact with the texts themselves." (CT 27)

The Catechist: Witness to the Truth

Testifying to the work of God in your life as you teach...

And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ~ REVELATION 12:11

Why the Catechist Must be a Witness...

IT IS THE PRIMORDIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH...TO WITNESS!

Indeed the primordial mission of the Church is to proclaim God and to be his witness before the world. This involves making known the true face of God and his loving plan of salvation for man, as it has been revealed in Jesus Christ. To prepare such witnesses, it is necessary for the Church to develop a profoundly religious catechesis, nourished on the Gospel, which will deepen man's encounter with God and forge a bond of permanent communion with him. (GDC 23)

MODERN MAN LISTENS...TO WITNESSES!

Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. (EN 41)

Explaining the Relationship of the Catechist to Jesus



That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete. ~ 1 John 1:1-4

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH JESUS (1 JOHN 1:1)

...they have *heard* his call
...they have *seen* his saving work
...they have *looked* upon him—fallen in love
...they have *touched* him

‘KNOWLEDGE’ AS INTIMACY:

FROM EXPERIENCE TO INTIMACY (1 JOHN 1:2)

He has been *made manifest* to them
They have *seen* him
Now they can *testify* to him
And *proclaim* what they have personally seen and heard

RESULTS OF THEIR RESPONSE (1 JOHN 1:3-4)

Fellowship with the Father and with us
That our *joy* may be complete

Identifying the “wonderful works of God” in your life...

~ St. Augustine of Hippo

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ~ PHILIPPIANS 4:4, 7-8

Reflect on the above passage of Scripture and use some or all of these questions to help you identify the “wonderful works of God” in your life...

How have I found joy in the Lord and in his Church?

When have I experienced the peace which surpasses understanding(through the Church)?

How have I experienced my heart being softened by Jesus (through his Church)?

How has my mind been changed by Christ and the Church?

How have I grown in virtue through Jesus and the Church?

What other blessings have I received from the Lord and his Church?

What difference has the Holy Spirit made in my life?

How have I loved those who are difficult for me to love?

What are some things I am thankful to God for (to his Church for)?





Giving your Testimony in your Teaching

"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for our hope..." ~ 1 PETER 3:15

How has the

Church's teaching on...

The Holy Trinity...

...impacted my life?

The Successor to Peter

Sanctification/justification

The Body of Christ

Truth

Creation

The Holy Eucharist

Being made in the image and likeness of God

The providence of the Father

The Incarnation, true God and true man

Grace as a sharing in Divine life

The sacraments/sacramentals

The redemptive value of our suffering



The Catechist *Must* be a Saint.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.”

~ Luke 6:40

“...it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.”

~ Matthew 10:25

“...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

~ Matthew 18:6

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

~ Hebrews 12:1-2

“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

~ 2 Timothy 2:24

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness.”

~ James 3:1

For Want of a Catechist the People will Perish

The preparation for Baptism and Christian instruction are both of vital concern to God's people, the Church, which hands on and nourishes the faith received from the apostles. (RCIA, GENERAL INTRODUCTION 7)

So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (ACTS 8:30-31)

*God desires all to be saved and to come
to a knowledge of the truth. ~ 1 Timothy 2:4*



THE ROLE OF THE CATECHIST IN MAKING GOD KNOWN:

- ✂ Be a witness, not just a voice that communicates knowledge. (see 1 John 1:1-4)
- ✂ Be the bearer of faith, the bearer of hope, and the bearer of love.
- ✂ Overcome ignorance of God of truth and goodness, of the purpose of life, of our eternal destiny.
- ✂ Facilitate change in order to follow Christ and to participate in the life of his family, the Church, teach conversion, teach prayer, teach the bond of charity, teach expressly for **these** folks.

"The most precious gift that the Church can offer the bewildered and restless world of our time is to form within it Christians who are confirmed in what is essential and who are humbly joyful in their faith." (GCM 8)

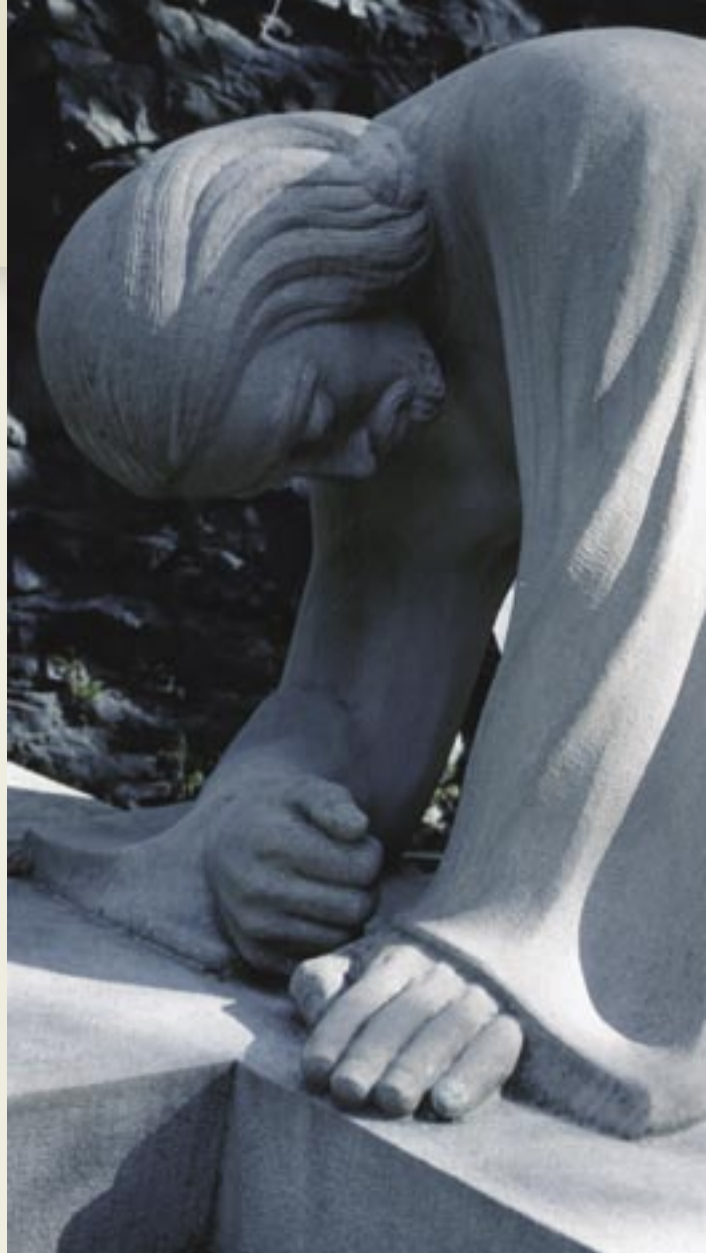
*“An adherence to the truths which the Lord
in his mercy has revealed... cannot remain abstract
and unincarnated.” (EN 23)*

As a catechist, teach yourself with the truth adhering.

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

- ✝ **Be humble**, so that the power of Christ may dwell in us.
*“Neither he who plants, nor he who waters, is of any special account.
Only God gives the growth.”
(1 Corinthians 3:7)*
- ✝ **Know that we have been chosen and sent by God.**
We speak with authority, not with our ideas, but God’s Word. We must speak with confidence, not with timidity.
*“My teaching is not my own; it comes from him who sent me.”
(John 7:16)*
- ✝ **Proclaim only the Word, the living Word that is Jesus Christ.** *“I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has done.” (Romans 15:18)*
- ✝ **Be courageous.** *“Enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness.” (Acts 4:29)*
- ✝ **Depend totally upon the power of the Holy Spirit.**
It is the Holy Spirit who causes the Word of salvation to be accepted and understood. *“We do not resort to trickery or falsify the Word of God. We proclaim the truth openly and commend ourselves to every man’s conscience before God.”
(2 Corinthians 4:2)*
- ✝ **Give time to prayer and study.** *“Apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)*
- ✝ **Work in faith—seek and expect God to work through you.** *“And Jesus went around announcing the Good News, casting out evil spirits, and healing all the sick.” (Matthew 4:23)*
- ✝ **Work in hope—God wants them more than you ever could.** *“They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.” (John 17:16)*
- ✝ **Speak in love—with gentleness and reverence.** *“Speak the truth in love.” (Ephesians 4:15)*

“When they are teaching, catechists should see that their instruction is filled with the spirit of the Gospel, adapted to the liturgical signs and the cycle of the Church’s year, suited to the needs of the catechumens, and as far as possible enriched by local traditions.” (RCIA, Introduction 16)



The Story: Context for Catechesis

“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son (Hebrews 1:1-2) to make all men see what is *the plan of the mystery* hidden for ages in God who created all things; *that through the Church* the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the Heavenly places.” (Ephesians 3:9-10)

THE FAITH TRANSMITTED THROUGH HISTORY

“This faith, transmitted by the ecclesial community, is one.” (GDC 106)

“**When catechesis transmits the mystery of Christ, the faith of the whole people of God echoes in its message throughout the course of history:** the faith received by the apostles from Christ himself and under the action of the Holy Spirit; that of the martyrs who have borne witness to it and still bear witness to it by their blood; that of the saints who have lived it and live it profoundly; that of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church who have taught it brilliantly; that of the missionaries who proclaim it incessantly; that of the theologians who help to understand it better; that of pastors who conserve it with zeal and love and who interpret it authentically.” (GDC 105)

CATECHESIS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

“**In the patristic period properly, catechumenal formation was realized through Biblical catechesis, based on recounting the history of salvation;** immediate preparation for Baptism by doctrinal catechesis, explaining the Creed and the *Our Father* which had just been handed on, together with their moral implications; and through the phase following the sacraments of initiation, a period of mystagogical catechesis which help the newly-baptized to interiorize these sacraments and incorporate themselves into the community.” (GDC 89) “I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4) “This patristic concept continues to illuminate the present catechumenate and initiatory catechesis itself. This latter, insofar as it accompanies the process of conversion, is essentially gradual and, in so far as it is at the service of one who has decided to follow Christ, it is eminently christocentric.” (GDC 89)



CATECHESIS TODAY

“For this reason, the Church, in transmitting today the Christian message, begins with the living awareness... a constant ‘memory’ of the saving events of the past, and makes them known. In the light of these, she interprets the present events of human history, where the Spirit of God is continually renewing the face of the earth, and she awaits with faith for the Lord’s coming” (GDC 107), who has put all things under his feet and who has been made “the head over all things for the Church, which is his Body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22-23)

“**Catechesis... leads to the discovery of the mystery of the Son of God behind his humanity; behind the history of the Church... through the presentation of salvation history by means of Biblical catechesis so as to make known the ‘deeds and words’ with which God has revealed himself to man...** [Catechesis] should illuminate the ‘today’ of the history of salvation... [and] situate the sacraments within the history of salvation by means of a mystagogy which ‘relives the great events of salvation history in the ‘today’ of her liturgy.’” (GDC 108)

Though Christ was “rooted in a specific culture... [he] penetrated the deepest strata of that culture,” purifying, transforming and elevating it to God, as the Word must necessarily do with every culture (GDC 109). By constantly recalling the *events of salvation history* to her children, the Church reminds us *through her catechists*, from the apostles, through the Fathers until the present time, that “these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction.” (1 Corinthians 10:11)



The Story

Technique: Highlight the plan of God for us and *his constant revelation to us* throughout human history. Be sure to make it clear that this is *your* story, and theirs, if they choose to accept God's invitation. One way to unfold "The Story" is as follows...

- a. Who is God (happy and complete as a community of persons who exist as an eternal exchange of love that we call *Trinitarian life*)
- b. His creation of angelic beings, some chose to rebel
- c. His creation of us out of love, to participate in his Divine life
- d. Our temptation (Satan our enemy) and sin (and loss)
- e. God's promise and plan for our salvation and divinization
- f. His gradual revelation of himself and gathering of a people
- g. Promises, prophecies, and covenants (as much of salvation history as you have time and need for)
- h. Mary's "fiat"
- i. **The Incarnation** (be sure to give it proper emphasis, *this is the crucial mystery of the faith*)
- j. Redemptive sacrifice on the Cross, and the fruits of salvation made possible by Jesus' dying and rising, sealed in the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
- k. The Church:
 - i) The family of God on earth
 - ii) "Dispenser of the Mystery" (see Ephesians 3:9-10 in the Jerusalem Bible)
 - iii) The kingdom of God
 - iv) The Body of Christ on earth (an incarnational distinctive)
- l. The history of God's people and his constant care, saints in constant supply (Mother Teresa is nothing new!)
- m. Today, you and I are part of the "The Story," living the Christian life (If you have time, show the precursors to sacramental living in the Old Testament)
- n. The sure promise and hope:
 - i) Jesus will come again
 - ii) Judgment
 - iii) The Heavenly Jerusalem
 - iv) Eternal life

Be sure to tell these as truths; this is not a fictional story. Keep referring to them as you teach other aspects of the faith. Show participants how *all* that has been revealed by God fits in "The Story," as its context.



Salvation History: The Catholic Family Story

And Jesus came to them and said: "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. So therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." ~ MATTHEW 28:18-20



Early Church to the Death of John the Apostle (ca. A.D. 90)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete. (1 John 1:1-4)

St. Mary (Jan 1); St. John the Baptist (Aug 29); St. Mary Magdalene (July 22); St. Paul the Apostle (Jan 25); St. Thomas the Apostle (July 3); St. Stephen (Dec 26); St. John the Apostle (Dec 27); St. Peter the Apostle (June 29)

Three Suggested Teachings: Scripture, Apostolic Succession, End Times

Post-Apostolic Persecutions & Early Church Fathers (ca. A.D. 90-320)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed.... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:18, 35, 37)

Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (Mar 7); St. Agnes (Jan 21); St. Cornelius (Sep 16); St. Ignatius of Antioch (Oct 17); St. Cecelia (Nov 22); St. Irenaeus of Lyons (June 28); St. Polycarp of Smyrna (Feb 23); Pope St. Sixtus II (Aug 7)

Three Suggested Teachings: Redemptive Suffering, Perseverance and Witness, Triumph of the Cross

Age of the Fathers (ca. A.D. 325-700)

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:12-13)

St. Gregory of Nanzianzen (Jan 2); St. Monica (Aug 27); St. Augustine (Aug 28); St. Gregory the Great (Sep 23); St. Athanasius (May 2); St. Scholastica (Feb 10); St. Benedict (July 11); St. John Chrysostom (Sep 13); St. Jerome (Sep 30); St. Patrick (Mar 17)

Three Suggested Teachings: Tradition, Universality of the Church, Discipleship



Christendom (ca. A.D. 800-1500)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

St. Thomas Aquinas (Jan 28); St. Dominic (Aug 8); St. Francis (Aug 25); St. Clare (Aug 11); St. Louis of France (Oct 4); St. Catherine of Siena (Apr 29); Sts. Isidore and Maria (May 15)

Three Suggested Teachings: Catholic Culture, Liturgy and Beauty in Human Works, Evangelical Counsels



Counter-Reformation (ca. A.D. 1550-1650)

As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:18-21)

St. Robert Bellarmine (Sep 17); St. Paul Miki (Feb 6); St. Philip Neri (May 26); St. Thomas More (June 22); St. Rose of Lima (Aug 23); Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico in 1531 (Dec 12); St. Peter Claver (Sep 9); St. Francis de Sales (Jan 24); St. Teresa of Jesus (Oct 15); St. Francis Xavier (Dec 3); St. Peter Canisius (Dec 21)

Three Suggested Teachings: Ecumenism, Magisterium, Oneness of the Church

Evangelization of the New World & the Enlightenment (ca. A.D. 1600-1860)



To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; she is created with the faithful in the womb. She made among men an eternal foundation, and among their descendants she will be trusted. To fear the Lord is wisdom's full measure. (Sirach 1:14-16)

St. Vincent de Paul (Sep 27); St. Junipero Serra (July 1); Bl. Kateri Tekawitha (July 14); St. Alphonsus Liguori (Aug 1); St. John Vianney (Aug 4); Apparitions of Our Lady at Lourdes in 1858 (Feb 11); Bl. Marie Rose Durocher (Oct 6); St. Elizabeth Seton (Jan 4); St. Martin de Porres (Nov 3)

Three Suggested Teachings: Humility, Faith and Reason, Tradition

First Vatican Council & the Industrial Age (ca. A.D. 1870-1930)

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. (Matthew 7:10-11)

St. Pius X (Aug 21); St. Maria Goretti (July 6); St. Charles Lwanga (June 3); Apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima in 1916-1917 (May 13); St. Theresa of the Child Jesus (Oct 1); St. Francis Xavier Cabrini (Nov 13); St. John Bosco (Jan 30); Bl. Miguel Pro (Nov 23); St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions (Nov 24)

Three Suggested Teachings: Infallibility, Justice, Social Teaching of the Church on Economics and Labor

World War II & Vatican Council II (ca. A.D. 1935-1965)

*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall see God.... You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is Heaven.
(Matthew 5:5, 9, 14, 16)*

**St. Maximillian Kolbe (Aug 14); St. Katherine Drexel (Mar 3);
St. Edith Stein (Aug 9); St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Sep 23); St. Josephine Bakhita (Feb 8); St. Gianna Molla (Apr 8); St. Faustina Kowalska (Oct 5)**

Three Suggested Teachings: Sanctity of Human Life, Hope, Episcopacy and the Church



Modern Papacy & the Church at the Millenium (ca. A.D. 1970-present moment)

*Let brotherly love continue.... Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings.
(Hebrews 13:1, 7-9)*

Bl. Teresa of Calcutta (Sep 5); St. Josemaria Escrivá (Jan 9); Pope John Paul II

Three Suggested Teachings: Universal Call to Holiness, Absoluteness of Truth, New Evangelization

If you want to be a catechist, decide to be a saint!



Having been definitively sent to the nations that she might be the universal sacrament of salvation, the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men. (CCC 849)



So Much to Learn... So Little Time
*What Must I Teach? What Do They **Have** to Know?*

Analyzing Doctrines: The Truths of the Faith

TEACH THE **PREMISE**

The premise of the doctrine is the underlying truth upon which the doctrine is based. It is not necessarily the definition. The following are three examples:

Faith: We believe because of the authority of God who reveals. He can never deceive nor be deceived. (see CCC 156)

Mary: From all eternity God intended to enlist the free cooperation of a creature to accomplish the Incarnation. He chose a daughter of Israel and she gave her consent. (see CCC 488, 494)

Sacred Scripture: God has chosen to speak in human words. He is the primary author of these written words. (see CCC 105)

TEACH THE **ESSENTIALS**

The essentials are those aspects of the doctrine which cannot be left to chance that the participants will get them on their own.

Faith: 1. Is certain 2. Necessary for salvation 3. Seeks understanding 4. A gift 5. Can be lost and increased (CCC 29, 162)

Mary: 1. Mother of God 2. Immaculate Conception 3. Perpetual Virginity 4. Assumption 5. Mother in the Order of Grace

Sacred Scripture: 1. Human authors are true authors 2. Interpretation by Magisterium 3. Christocentricity

TEACH WHAT IS **COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD**

Insufficient or ineffective catechesis has left many participants with a false understanding of doctrines of the faith.

Faith: It is not a “blind leap.”

Mary: How Marian doctrines point to Christ. Devotion and the content of private revelation (apparitions).

Sacred Scripture: Scripture is only one aspect of (God’s Divine) Revelation.

TEACH THE **SCRIPTURAL BASIS**

All doctrine is grounded in sacred Scripture. Many Scriptures enlighten understanding of a doctrine.

Faith: Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Mary: Luke 1:28: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!”

Sacred Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching...”

TEACH **RELATED DOCTRINES**

The Faith is an organic unity. The doctrines are not independent. Often the teaching of a related doctrine will reveal to a participant what had been previously hidden.

Faith: Jesus: Perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2); **Prayer:** Increase our faith (Luke 17:5); **Redemption:** Your faith has saved you (Luke 7:50).

Mary: The **Father** chose his daughter to make the **Incarnation** possible. She is the Mother and model of the **Church**.

Sacred Scripture: Together with **sacred Tradition**, they make up the single sacred **Deposit of Faith**.

And you think you don’t have enough time to teach... Consider the plight of St. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary, who was known to have baptized ten thousand people in a single month:

“There was no time for careful teaching, for long instruction. On his arrival at a hamlet he would call together men and boys, in his halting, parrot-like Tamil he recited the Creed, the Commandments, some prayers, which he made his audience repeat after him when he had taught them to make the sign of the Cross. A question followed each article of the Creed: ‘Do you believe?’ A murmur of many voices answered, as dusky arms were crossed on naked breasts: ‘We believe.’ Then came Baptism and each new Christian received a palm-leaf on which the Father’s own hand had written his Christian name.” ~ Margaret Yeo in St. Francis Xavier: Apostle to the East, p. 145

Themes for Catechesis in Each of the Periods





Catechesis in the Precatechumenate: Delivering the Gospel

From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love. The whole period of the precatechumenate is set aside for this evangelization, so that the genuine will to follow Christ and seek Baptism may mature. (RCIA 37)

THE ELEMENTS OF THE PRECATECHUMENATE ARE:

- ✦ A suitable proclamation of the Gospel (see Mark 1:15)
- ✦ The truth of the message of the Gospel communicated by testimonies and explanation of Scripture (see RCIA 38)
- ✦ Answers given to questions of the inquirers in the form of apologetics (see RCIA 38)
- ✦ Teaching that adequately prepares inquirers for the first major Rites (see RCIA 42)
- ✦ A time of first faith, continuing conversion, and desire for the sacraments (see RCIA 42, 43)
- ✦ Christian community lived out with the team, and in the context of a welcoming parish (see RCIA 38, 45)

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?



- ⊕ The Good News about God and his wonderful works
- ⊕ The Good News about his love and his plan for us
- ⊕ It must be:
 - ✦ TRINITARIAN: He, who 'was sent by the Father' and 'anointed by the Spirit', is Lord, Messiah, and Savior, and the Son of God and Son of Mary (GDC 99-100)
 - ✦ CHRIST-CENTERED: Through the saving action of his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven (the Paschal mystery), he has made a way for us to take advantage of the Father's plan for our salvation (John 14:6; GDC 98)
 - ✦ ECCLESIAL: While on earth, he went about doing good and preaching the Kingdom of God, which he perpetuated in a visible Church (Ephesians 3:10; see CCC 760)
 - ✦ PERSONAL: The Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to access in the Church the full power and merits won for us by Jesus, which dispenses them in the sanctifying action of the sacramental life (see GDC 43, 117)
 - ✦ FORWARD-LOOKING: He ascended to the Father to prepare a place for his people who have been freed from sin and taken into the family of God (John 14:1-7)
 - ✦ HEAVEN-FOCUSED: His family will endure the judgment that is to come and will enjoy his 'steadfast love that endures forever' in the Heavenly banquet; the Father's plan for our salvation is for us to "become partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3-4)
 - ✦ EXPERIENCED IN THIS COMMUNITY: The Catholics of this parish family warmly invite you to come and see our life and with us to enter into full communion with Christ and participate in the Father's plan (GDC 102, 256)

ELEMENTS OF THE GOSPEL:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| ⊕ Revelation | ⊕ Salvation | ⊕ The Church as necessary for salvation | ⊕ Jesus |
| ⊕ Our Sin Problem | ⊕ Scripture | ⊕ The Christian life: believing, hoping, loving | |

What Shall we do in Inquiry/ Precatechumenate Gatherings?

Continually hook everything to the Story of the wonderful works of God and his plan for us.

Help inquirers understand how to navigate the Bible.

Soak each session in Scripture in order to guide and to apply Revelation to real life.

Sing hymn which can be learned easily and which express a seeking for God.

Teach prayer and model it. Pray individually with inquirers. Pray as a group using different prayer forms.

- ✠ Intercessions
- ✠ Psalms
- ✠ Basic Catholic prayers
- ✠ Spontaneous prayer

Give personal testimony to God's love, his faithfulness and his family, the Church.

- ✠ Catechists/clergy/team/godparents/sponsors
- ✠ Neophytes/other parishioners

Show how we can know that God exists.

- ✠ Through reason alone man can know **that** God exists.
- ✠ From Revelation however, man can know **who** God is.

Introduce inquirers to Jesus using Scriptural images which reveal different aspects about him.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ✠ Jesus the Good Shepherd | ✠ Jesus the Son of God |
| ✠ Jesus the Savior | ✠ Jesus the King |
| ✠ Jesus the God-Man | ✠ Jesus the High Priest |
| ✠ Jesus the Teacher | ✠ Jesus the Way for us |
| ✠ Jesus the Son of Mary | ✠ Jesus the Truth for us |
| ✠ Jesus the Redeemer | ✠ Jesus the Life for us |

Offer a library of basic books, pamphlets, tapes, and videos for people to use.

Offer a tour of the church and sacristy.

Encourage inquirers to ask questions, and answer them in an apologetic form (in order to remove “stumbling blocks”).

Make sure that there is time for silent reflection. Make sure that there is time for sharing between inquirers and team/godparents/sponsors/clergy.

Provide the opportunity for friendships to begin.

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator. (CCC 27)





Apologetics in the Precatechumenate: Speaking the Truth in Love

In the presentation of the Christian religion, catechesis must deal with the many questions, difficulties, and doubts which arise in the human heart. Indeed, these questions should be brought to light when they have been obscured or confused by ignorance or indifference. The faith response to these questions will appear meaningful if it is rooted in the Bible and in concrete historical life, and if it is respectful of reason and attentive to the signs of the times. (ACCC 48)

USE OF APOLOGETICS IN THE PRECATECHUMENATE

- ✧ Inquiry, not challenge
- ✧ Primarily presentation of principles, not refutation of hostile arguments
- ✧ Hotly debated topics are not answered simply

PRINCIPAL TECHNIQUES

- ✧ Prompt for Questions:
 - ✧ **Ask for them**; welcome and encourage questions—even repeatedly—draw them out
 - ✧ **Give a list** and let people pick their favorites
 - ✧ **Provide blanks** for submitting questions
 - ✧ Consider **answering important questions** not asked
- ✧ Answer Questions:
 - ✧ **Restate** the question so all hear exactly what you are answering and the questioner knows you heard the question correctly
 - ✧ Explain Catholic beliefs **simply and clearly**—this is key
 - ✧ Answer **accurately**—if you're not sure, admit it, then look it up
 - ✧ Answer **respectfully and non-defensively**
 - ✧ Rely on **Scripture, Tradition, the Magisterium, liturgy, and reason**
 - ✧ Answer **practically** with real life application in mind
 - ✧ Answer **immediately**, or give good reason for necessary delay (inquirers may not be there 'later')
 - ✧ Answer **cheerfully, tirelessly, and patiently**
 - ✧ Ask for further questions did you answer the question **adequately for them**

IMPORTANCE OF OVERCOMING

AN OVERLY APOLOGETIC APPROACH TO DOCTRINE

- ✦ The aesthetic aspect of doctrine in catechesis—God's revelation of truth is deeply beautiful
- ✦ The organic, systematic nature of doctrine in catechesis—belief is a totality, not a collection of doctrines (pattern, not a pile)
- ✦ The glory of the Lord as expressed in catechesis
- ✦ The truths of the faith are a way of life, not just a way of thinking

PREPARATION FOR CATECHISTS

- ⊕ Prayer: "As much time before the Blessed Sacrament as on the platform." (Frank Sheed)
- ⊕ Doctrine as an organic reality—we teach the paradigm of love given and love returned (see John 15:9-12)
- ⊕ Scripture, the Magisterium, Church history
- ⊕ Sound reasoning: read, listen, practice
- ⊕ Knowledge of the primary points of the most common belief systems

A catechist can deal with tough questions if the inquirers are led to see that the Church is about expressing God's love—this gives them a paradigm, a lens, a background for seeing and processing the world. (see 1 John 4:7-12)



Catechesis in the Catechumenate: Faith, Hope, and Love



The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope, or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love. (CCC 25)

THE GOAL OF A 'SUITABLE CATECHESIS' IS ENTRANCE INTO THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST. (RCIA 75.1)

- ⊕ Look at a model that will present the faith so it can be easily referenced and increasingly applied in the ordinary adult Christian life
- ⊕ We must keep in mind the themes that we should weave throughout our teachings
- ⊕ The overarching reality is that love is the principle on which all that must be believed is based, that love is the principle on which truth is based, that love is the principle on which behavior is based, that love is the principle in finding the way...Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (see John 14:6)

The Life of Faith, Hope, and Love: Model for Immediate Application to the Adult Christian Life

We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of **faith** and labor of **love** and steadfastness of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3)

FAITH FORMS AND INFORMS ➡	HOPE (AND FAITH) FORM & INFORM ➡	LOVE
Prudence, wisdom Creed and Prayer Articles of the Creed Prayers of thanksgiving, petition, adoration, and praise	Courage, temperance Liturgy and Prayer Sacraments and sacramentals Mission and community Liturgical and intercessory prayer Lord's Prayer	Justice, piety Moral Life and Prayer Virtues, beatitudes, sin, mercy Contrition, repentance, and contemplation

THE THEMES IN THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:

PRIMARY:

- ✦ Trinity
- ✦ Person of Jesus (Humanity and Divinity)
- ✦ Paschal Mystery
- ✦ Dignity of Human Person

SECONDARY:

- ✦ Grace
- ✦ Symphonic and Organic Nature of the Faith
- ✦ Necessity of the Visible Church
- ✦ Reasonableness of the Faith

[T]he harmony of the overall message requires a "hierarchy of truths", in so far as the connection between each one of these and the foundation of the faith differs. Nevertheless, this hierarchy does not mean that some truths pertain to faith itself less than others, but rather that some truths are based on others as of a higher priority and are illumined by them. (GDC 114)



Icon of the Sacred Heart by David Clayton



Catechesis in Purification and Enlightenment: Preparing to Receive the Life of God

CATECHETICAL THEMES FOR PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

The guidelines for this period (which normally coincides with Lent) as well as the Rites associated with it, enable catechists to shift the focus of teaching from an exposition of the Deposit of Faith to reflection and meditation.

Before they receive the sacraments of initiation:

“...the elect must have the intention of achieving an **intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church**, and they are expected particularly to progress in **genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance.**” (RCIA 142)

Below are themes appropriate to this period, taken directly from the RCIA guidelines and Rites:

1. The Mystery of Sin

- ✝ The power of sin (RCIA 141, 143)
- ✝ Acknowledgement of sin and failing (RCIA 153)
- ✝ Forgiveness of sin and freedom from the effects of sin (RCIA 144, 154, 469)

2. The Power of Darkness

- ✝ Satan and his minions (RCIA 141)
- ✝ Freedom from the effects of the devil (RCIA 144)
- ✝ Protection against temptation (RCIA 141)

3. Purification of Heart and Mind

- ✝ Searching the conscience (RCIA 139)
- ✝ Renunciation of self and penance (RCIA 139, 469)
- ✝ Conversion and change of heart (RCIA 153, 469)

4. The Healing Effect of Mercy

- ✝ Revelation and the healing of weakness (RCIA 469)
- ✝ Freedom from falsehoods concerning God (RCIA 470)
- ✝ Christ, the Lord of Mercy, in Baptism and Reconciliation (RCIA 167, 299)

5. The Incredible Sacrament: Baptism

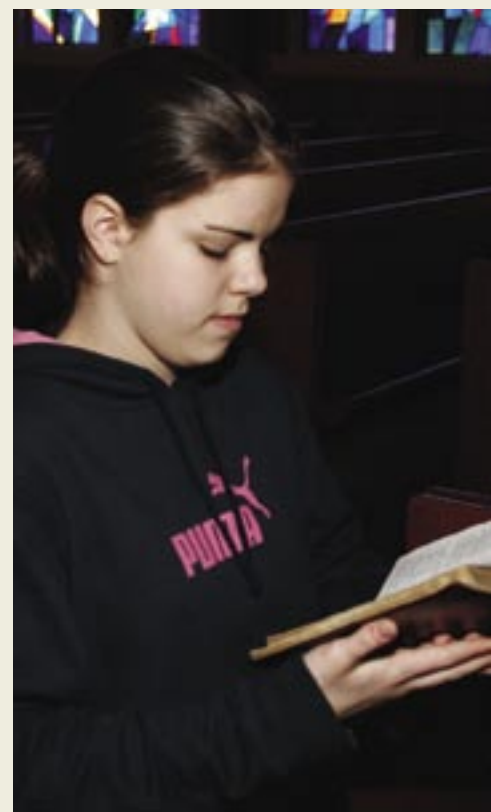
- ✝ Reflection on their Baptism (or their coming Baptism) (RCIA 452, 556)
- ✝ Ransomed by Christ, being baptized into his death and resurrection (RCIA 168, 174)
- ✝ Members of his body, brothers and sisters in God's family (RCIA 134, 452, 465)

6. A Deeper Knowledge of Christ, the Savior

- ✝ Recognition of Christ's presence in daily life (RCIA 470)
- ✝ Obedience to him (RCIA 131, 556)
- ✝ Being conformed to Christ's suffering (RCIA 456)

7. Prayer

- ✝ Spiritual recollection (RCIA 138)
- ✝ Interior reflection (RCIA 139)
- ✝ The help of the Holy Spirit (RCIA 153)



THE LITURGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS PERIOD

Catechesis in the period of purification and enlightenment should be significantly informed by the Rites that inaugurate and permeate these weeks of preparation for the sacraments of initiation.

Rite of Sending to the Bishop (for Election and for Recognition)

- ✠ “found strength in God’s grace” (RCIA 537)
- ✠ “support in community’s prayers and example” (RCIA 537, 540)
- ✠ “prayers in spiritual formation” (RCIA 537, 540)
- ✠ “listened to the Word of Christ” (RCIA 541)
- ✠ “in the weeks ahead” (RCIA 544)
 - ✠ Strengthened in their call
 - ✠ Built into the kingdom of Christ
 - ✠ Sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit

RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Unbaptized

- ✠ Be faithful to God in return for his faithfulness (RCIA 554)
- ✠ Strive to reach the fullness of truth (RCIA 554)

Baptized

- ✠ Join in a Lenten spirit of repentance (RCIA 558)
- ✠ Hear the Lord’s call to continuing conversion (RCIA 557)
- ✠ Be faithful to the baptismal covenant (RCIA 557)

Penitential Rite (*baptized*)

- ✠ 2nd Sunday of Lent—Year A, B, C (Transfiguration of Christ from one of the synoptic Gospels)
 - ✠ “help to prepare to celebrate the sacrament of Penance” (RCIA 461)
 - ✠ Seek forgiveness of sins and healing of weaknesses (RCIA 469, 470)
 - ✠ Seek readiness for sealing by the Holy Spirit (RCIA 469)
 - ✠ Seek readiness for being fed at the Lord’s Table (RCIA 469)

Scrutinies (*unbaptized*)

- ✠ 3rd Sunday of Lent—living water (John 4:5–42 ~ the Samaritan woman at the well)
- ✠ 4th Sunday of Lent—light of the world (John 9:1–41 ~ the man born blind)
- ✠ 5th Sunday of Lent—resurrection and life (John 11:1–45 ~ the raising of Lazarus)

Presentations (*unbaptized*)

- ✠ Creed—“the wonderful deeds of God” and “the great mysteries” (RCIA 147)
- ✠ Lord’s Prayer—“a new spirit of adoption” (RCIA 147)

Deepening an inner adherence to the Church (RCIA 477) (*baptized*)

- ✠ Reflection on the mystery of their Baptism (RCIA 556)
- ✠ Reflection on their heritage: the tradition of the Church (RCIA 556)

Sacrament of Penance (RCIA 482) (*baptized*)

- ✠ Healing the wounds of sin and strength for the way of holiness (RCIA 470)
- ✠ Trust in God’s mercy (RCIA 469)

Preparation Rites (RCIA 185)

- ✠ Recitation of the Creed (RCIA 193)
- ✠ Ephephtha Rite (RCIA 197)
- ✠ Choosing a baptismal/Confirmation name (RCIA 200)





Catechesis in Mystagogy: Deepening in the Graces Received

(Teaching from the Rites: see RCIA, 229, 230, 244)

The time between Easter and Pentecost is spent in deepening the understanding and appreciation for the sacramental life. As well, the deepest meaning of discipleship must be examined, including the responsibility of all the baptized to give personal witness to the power of the Gospel, and to bring the light of Christian revelation to every corner of the world. Catechesis during this period should be driven by the Lectionary. The Church intends that the Lectionary readings for the Sundays and the Feast of the Ascension form the basis for the teaching given during this period.

MYSTAGOGY READINGS FOR YEAR A

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 118

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Sacrament of Penance ~ Apostolicity

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Emmaus Event ~ Paradigm for the Mass

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:20b-25

John 10:1-10

The Sheepfold = The Church ~ Relationship with Jesus

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 6:1-7

Psalm 33

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

Heaven ~ Relationship with the Father through Jesus

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Psalm 66

1 Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-20

Relationship with the Spirit through Jesus ~ “do whatever He tells you”

Ascension

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47

Ephesians 1:17-23

Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission ~ Evangelism/Witness ~ Necessity of Baptism

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:12-14

Psalm 27

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

Prayer for Unity and Glorification of the Church ~ Apostolicity

The distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community. (RCIA 247)

Ideas for Post-Baptismal Catechetical Sessions, and the Neophyte Year

Ask neophytes to share their experiences of the sacraments, and provide an opportunity to reflect on the Vigil.

Help neophytes see the sacraments in light of Scriptural images (called “typology”). For example...

Baptism

- ✦ Creation
- ✦ The Crossing of the Red Sea
- ✦ Living Water and the Samaritan Woman
- ✦ Water from Jesus’ Side

Eucharist

- ✦ Manna in the Desert
- ✦ Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes
- ✦ Last Supper: Commandment of Love
- ✦ The Road to Emmaus

Tell the Story of the “wonderful works” of God again, this time highlighting the sacramental life, foretold in the Old Testament and now available to them in the New Testament.

Proclaim and reflect on Scripture for the post-baptismal catechesis — especially the Sunday readings of Year A of the Easter season.

Sing songs to celebrate the Easter season. Repeat songs from throughout the initiation process and the Easter Vigil.

Pray together:

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|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✦ Eucharistic Adoration | ✦ Liturgy of the Hours | ✦ Rosary |
| ✦ Extemporaneous Prayer | ✦ Guided Meditation | ✦ Other Catholic Devotions |

Tell stories of saints, such as those who were baptized or received into the Church as adults (St. Augustine, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, etc). Discuss the Universal Call to Holiness.

Make presentations on new topics or topics discussed earlier, keeping in mind the additional grace now at work in the lives of the neophytes.

Discuss current moral/social issues in the light of the Church’s teaching to help neophytes gain a “Catholic worldview.”

Set aside time for silent reflection or sharing between neophytes, team, and sponsors.

Encourage neophytes to continue asking questions as they come up. Answer them.

Make a pilgrimage to a local shrine, the Cathedral, etc.

Attend a Mass for new Catholics with the bishop.

Have a potluck with the pastor every six weeks or so.

Keep in touch! — Maintain a mailing list of neophytes; send a newsletter; create a website.

Insist that sponsors maintain regular contact with neophytes.

Help neophytes begin a Bible study or join a small faith-sharing group in the parish.

Discuss what it means to share in the Church’s mission of evangelization — spread the Good News!

Share opportunities for involvement in social outreach activities in the parish.

Have a retreat for neophytes in Lent and a celebration on the anniversary of their initiation.

Ask neophytes to assist with the next RCIA group, perhaps as a team member.





Initiation Catechesis

A Deepening of the Roots (GDC 276)

[The catechumenate] is not a mere exposition of dogmatic truths and norms for morality, but a period of formation in the whole Christian life, an apprenticeship of sufficient duration, during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher. (AG 14)

Jesus looked at him and loved him. ~ Mark 10:21

INITIATION CATECHESIS...

A process of conversion not a program of classes:

- ✦ A process ~ not a program of pre-set duration for all participants (GDC 143)
- ✦ A turning process ~ focused on conversion from sin to sanctity (GDC 82)
- ✦ A gradual process ~ building systematically piece upon piece (GDC 88-89)
- ✦ A personal process ~ mindful that conversion is highly individual (GDC 118; CT 31)
- ✦ A pervasive process ~ leaving no part of participants' lives untouched (GDC 116; CT 22)
- ✦ A community process ~ joining not just to God, but to his visible family (GDC 72, 158; CT 24)
- ✦ A supernatural process ~ "then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45)

*She turned around and saw Jesus there,
but did not know it was Jesus... Then, Jesus said to her, "Mary."
She turned and said to him, "Teacher!" ~ John 20:14, 16*

ELEMENTS OF INITIATION CATECHESIS

- ⊕ To know (GDC 174) ~ "...sincere and patient dialogue..." (AG 11)
- ⊕ To be known (GDC 158-159) ~ "establish relationships of respect and love" (AG 11)
- ⊕ Centered on the One to be known ~ Jesus is the point (GDC 89)
- ⊕ Preparatory only ~ implying life-long pursuit of Christ at the feet of Mother Church (GDC 90)
- ⊕ An invitation to participation ~ mindful of the reciprocal nature of inculturation; the Church needs those who enter (GDC 90)
- ⊕ Discernment ~ teaching them to read what God has written in themselves (GDC 152c)
- ⊕ Definitive goal ~ peace, joy, the satisfaction of our deepest desires, and the beginning of Heaven (GDC 117; CT 21)
 - ✦ Systematic and organic
 - ✦ Focused on essentials
 - ✦ Open to the fullness of the Christian life

*This comprehensive formation includes more than instruction: it is an **apprenticeship of the entire Christian life**...which promotes an authentic following of Christ, focused on his Person; it implies education in knowledge of the faith and in the life of faith, in such a manner that the entire person, at his deepest levels, feels enriched by the Word of God; it helps the disciple of Christ to transform the old man in order to assume his baptismal responsibilities and to profess the faith from the heart. (GDC 67)*



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