

LIVING *as* MISSIONARY DISCIPLES



NATIONAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS WORKSHEETS

Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Contents

Introduction

Context and Tools to Assess and Enhance Catechetical Formation in an Evangelizing Spirit	i
The New Evangelization as the Context for Missionary Discipleship	ii
Missionary Disciples Called to Catechize	iii
Knowledge and Skills for the Formation of Missionary Disciples	vii
The Rich Harvest of Missionary Discipleship	vii
Ways to Use This Document	viii

Worksheets

1. Parish Evangelization	1
2. Evangelization	2
3. Six Tasks of Catechesis	3
4. Inculturating the Gospel in Parish Catechetical Programs	4
5. Catechetical Tasks in Inculturation	5
6. Nine Criteria for Authentic Catechesis	6
7. Divine Pedagogy and Human Methodology	7
8. Pastor as Catechetical Leader	10
9. Strategies for the Pastor as Catechetical Leader	11
10. Priests: Educators in the Faith by Virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders	13
11. Liturgical Catechesis	14
12. Sacramental Catechesis	15
13. Moral Catechesis	16
14. Children's Catechesis (Pre-K to 4th Grade)	17
15. Catechetical Guidelines (Grades 5 to 8)	18
16. High School Catechetical Guidelines	19
17. Tasks of Adult Catechesis	20
18. Catechetical Methodology for Adults	21
19. Parish Catechists of Children as Partners with Parents and Families	22
20. Key Functions of the Parish Catechetical Office	23
21. Catechist Checklist	25

Introduction

Context and Tools to Assess and Enhance Catechetical Formation in an Evangelizing Spirit

Ten years have swiftly flown by since the publication of the *National Directory for Catechesis* in 2005, years which have seen considerable growth and change within the Catholic Church. In these years, the Catholic Church has experienced the pontificates of three popes—St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis and celebrated the Year of Faith, the Synod on the New Evangelization, and the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Pope Paul VI reawakened the Church’s evangelizing mission, St. John Paul II heralded the call for the New Evangelization, and Pope Benedict XVI reposed the encounter with the Risen Lord and the Church. Pope Francis, in the document that reflected the work of the Synod on the New Evangelization, *Evangelii Gaudium*, situates the ministry of catechesis within the process of missionary discipleship. By virtue of their baptism, the People of God have become missionary disciples. Pope Francis notes that “every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries” but rather that we are always “missionary disciples.”¹ As catechists who herald and echo the Gospel, this witness of life should call us “constantly to go forth to others out of love, to bear witness to Jesus and to talk about Jesus, to proclaim Jesus.” This missionary message is at the heart of the Gospel and was reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, which asserted that “the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.”²

This is clearly a time of immense possibilities for the Catholic Church in the United States as new directions for evangelization, catechesis, and missionary activity have been identified within the process of discipleship formation. The renewal of emphasis on evangelization and catechesis within the context of the new evangelization has produced many praiseworthy initiatives and efforts in the formation of youth, adults, and children. As such, it has been a remarkable period for the reorientation and promotion of evangelization and catechesis within the universal Church.

1 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013), no. 120.

2 Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church* (*Ad Gentes*), no. 2.

The New Evangelization as the Context for Missionary Discipleship

The New Evangelization is the context for missionary discipleship and begins with the encounter with Jesus. We look to Jesus, the master who personally formed his Apostles and disciples. Christ himself teaches us how to evangelize, how to invite people into communion with him, and how to create a culture of witness: namely, through love, mercy, and joy. Christ gives us the method: “Come and see” (Jn 1:39); Follow me (Mt 9:9); Remain in me (Jn 15:4-6); Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). The words of Christ form the methodology for missionary discipleship that corresponds to:

Come and See — Encounter*
Follow Me — Accompany*
Remain in Me — Community*
Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations — Send*

The first stage of the process is the invitation to “come and see” Jesus. This encounter with Christ is an invitation to a change of mind and heart, a change of life, a *metanoia*. This invitation to “follow” Christ is the beginning of a gradual and continual process of conversion to invite all to a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, to develop a mature conscience, to sustain one’s faith through ongoing catechesis, and to integrate one’s faith into all aspects of one’s life. As people respond in faith and grow closer to Jesus, their communion with Jesus draws them into a deepening communion with one another and with his Body, the Church. In our culture, which eschews community in favor of individualism, it is essential to affirm that discipleship and communion are inseparable. This does not mean simply teaching what we have come to know but living what we have come to believe in love, namely that Jesus Christ, “by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father’s infinite mercy. On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.’”³ This rediscovery of the *kerygma*, or first proclamation, is one which should be kept at the center of all evangelizing and catechetical efforts. It is considered first, not because it exists as the beginning and then is forgotten or replaced, but because it is the principal proclamation of Jesus Christ that must be announced throughout the process of catechesis in many different ways. It is the *kerygma* that constitutes the core work of catechesis proclaimed by missionary disciples.

3 EG, no. 164.

* For a fully articulated treatment of this process, please see *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* (Encounter, pp. 9-14, 31; Accompany, pp. 14-15, 32; Community, pp. 16-17, 32-33; Send, pp. 17-18, 33-34).

Missionary Disciples Called to Catechize

Moments of triumph as well as moments of tragedy often dramatically highlight people's need for God, who reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Less dramatic circumstances and quiet everyday moments also find us reaching out for God and asking him to help us make sense of our lives—where do we come from and where we are going—and what is the meaning of our lives? Catechists, who are the Church's witnesses to God's existence, message, and loving presence, enable people in all these moments to meet the living God and to form a relationship that can continue to grow through a lifetime. Their apostolic work springs from the Sacrament of Baptism and is strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation.

After initial discernment, these baptized members of Christ's Body, the Church, who accept a special calling from the Holy Spirit, are affirmed and commissioned by the bishop and his delegates to serve the Church through the ministry of catechist. Their vocation requires cultivation and maturation of human gifts and talents, deepening spirituality, faith knowledge, and catechetical skills, and a passion for living and sharing the Good News with people of all ages and circumstances. Catechists know that they can count on the Holy Spirit to continue to be with them and to prompt them with just the right words to say as his faithful witnesses.

In confirming their call, the Church commits itself to an ongoing covenant with catechists to support and train them as disciples called to catechize. The following are important partners in catechesis: parish catechetical leaders, catechists, those catechized, the family, the parish, the bishop, and his delegates. Should any of these partners be poorly engaged or absent from the catechetical enterprise, the catechetical initiative will be weakened for all.

Before we take another step, we must acknowledge that we cannot talk about catechesis without talking about evangelization. "In his apostolic exhortation, *On Evangelization in the Modern World*, Pope Paul VI articulated an important principle for the renewal of catechesis when he described catechesis as a **work of evangelization** in the context of the mission of the Church.

DID YOU KNOW?

17,644: The number of Catholic parishes in the United States providing ongoing catechesis.

78.2 million: Total who identify themselves as Catholic.

Two-thirds: Percent of Catholic children in the United States who depend upon **catechists** in parish-based programs to provide their catechesis.

Millions more from other age groups and settings depend on **catechists** to provide their catechesis.

This understanding clarified that catechesis is “a fundamental element of evangelization through all its stages and that both those who evangelize and those who are evangelized need to be nourished by the word of God.”⁴

Each of the popes who succeeded Pope Paul VI continued to reflect on and deepen the Church’s understanding of evangelization. Throughout his entire pontificate, St. John Paul II continued to summon the Church to a “new evangelization,” echoing Pope Paul VI’s call for a “clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Paschal Mystery.” In preparation for the October 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, Pope Benedict described the work of New Evangelization as an ongoing call to “re-propose the perennial truth of Christ’s Gospel.” This New Evangelization is intended for “those who have never heard the Gospel preached (*missio ad gentes*) and do not know Jesus, for continuing growth in faith that is the ordinary life of the Church, and for those who have become distant from the Church.”

Catechists therefore need to embrace a larger role as evangelizing agents who are skilled in the process of evangelization⁵ and carefully equipped to discern the opportune moments when a person’s initial faith is ready to be deepened with catechesis. Catechists themselves need to be evangelized in an ongoing way as well. And they need to remain vigilant to build on initial acts of evangelization with a catechesis that is appropriate for each person at that stage of his or her faith journey.

Let us first reflect on partner roles in the Church’s ministry of catechesis. There are many that we will address. Later, we will return to invite these partners to consider some practical ways that each partner can contribute to the Church’s evangelizing catechetical mission.

Under the direction of the pastor, the *parish catechetical leader* (PCL) is a qualified and competent professionally trained parish staff member and important partner serving the Church’s catechetical ministry. Depending on the size and needs of the parish, the PCL may be responsible for one or more of these responsibilities: 1) overall direction of the parish catechetical programs for adults, youth, and children; 2) planning, implementation, and evaluation of the parish catechetical program; 3) Recruitment, formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists; 4) implementation of diocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines; 5) collaboration with the pastor, other parish ministers, and appropriate committees, boards, and councils; 6) assistance in liturgical planning; and 7) attention to their own personal, spiritual, and professional development.⁶

4 See *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), no. 17 C.

5 See NDC, no. 17 C.

6 See NDC, no. 54 B.

The *catechist*⁷ is an obvious partner in the process. When we think of catechists at the parish level, we usually think of three groups of people serving diverse age groups and settings—parish catechists, religion teachers in Catholic schools, and those parents who choose to serve as their children’s formal catechists. Catechists should be practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the Church. By God’s grace, catechists will be drawn to embrace and to continue to deepen the experience of Jesus Christ so that they can witness to others about Jesus’ saving love revealed in his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. During formation, catechists will be helped to reflect on the context in which they will teach. They are in a unique position to acknowledge both the positive and negative aspects of the culture in which they live and to assist others in affirming what is in keeping with the Good News of Jesus Christ while rejecting other aspects not aligned with the Gospel.⁸ Catechists will also be helped to understand and faithfully echo the Teachings of the Church in ways that best serve understanding and adherence to the faith in those catechized.

Those catechized are called to be active partners too. They are invited to pray to the Holy Spirit and to actively seek his help in 1) being open to God’s Word, 2) responding to God’s ongoing call to conversion, and 3) pursuing a deeper understanding and commitment to living as Jesus’ disciples. As they advance in age, understanding, and practice of the virtues, those catechized will likewise find opportunities to give witness to their faith. They may even be called to become catechists themselves. They will find support and modeling of Christian life and discipleship through their participation in family and parish life.

It is obvious of course, that *the family* is the key partner in catechesis. Parents are the “primary educators or catechists for their children.”⁹ “They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith. . . . by loving each other in the context of a Christian marriage and their love of Christ and his Church. Their participation in the life of the parish—above all in the Sunday Eucharist—their willingness to evangelize and serve others, and their dedication to daily prayer demonstrate the authenticity of their profession of faith. . . . The catechesis given by parents with the family ‘precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.’”¹⁰ Their commitment to the catechetical formation of their children by enrolling them in Catholic school or parish catechetical programs, and their involvement with sacramental preparations for their children is irreplaceable.¹¹ If they choose to homeschool their children, they may also become the formal catechists for their children in their ongoing formation in the faith and moral life.

7 See NDC, no. 54 B 8-9 d, C.

8 For a helpful reflection on the context in which the catechist teaches, see Wuerl, *New Evangelization: Passing on the Catholic Faith Today* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.), 21-30.

9 Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)*, (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2016) no. 84.

10 NDC, no. 54 C.

11 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*. nos. 86 and 230.

The parish community is another partner in catechesis. “The parish is the primary experience of the Church for most Catholics. It is where the faithful celebrate the sacraments . . . hear the word of God proclaimed . . . and are enabled to live distinctively Christian lives of charity and service in their family, economic, and civic situations. It is the living and permanent environment for growth in the faith. The parish energizes the faithful to carry out Christ’s mission by providing spiritual, moral, and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners. . . . The parish is the preeminent place for the catechesis of adults, youth, and children.”¹²

It should always be remembered that *the bishop* is the chief catechist in his diocese. “He is responsible for the total catechetical mission of the diocese, safeguards and transmits the authentic teaching of Christ in his preaching and teaching . . . is a herald of the faith with a real passion for catechesis . . . and directs catechesis through the diocesan offices responsible for catechetical activities.”¹³ “*Pastors, priests and deacons*, each in their own way, collaborate with their bishop in ensuring that the goals of the diocesan catechetical mission are achieved. Because priests are absolutely essential contributors to an effective catechetical program, they need to give careful attention to their own catechetical formation in the seminary and continue their education and spiritual formation after ordination. They, along with deacons, should have proper catechetical training, which includes supervised catechetical experience.”¹⁴ “*Women and men in consecrated life* are particularly suited to serve as parish or diocesan catechetical leaders. Their past and current contributions to catechesis are unique and cannot be supplied by either priests or laity.”¹⁵

Depending on the size, needs, administrative structure, and resources of the diocese, the bishop may engage a diocesan director of catechesis along with staff who serve as the bishop’s *delegates* for catechetical matters. The responsibilities of the director and possible staff are carefully detailed in the NDC. “The diocesan catechetical office should collaborate with other diocesan offices and agents that have a catechetical dimension, most especially the Catholic school office.”¹⁶ Among these duties, “The pastoral care of catechists is an essential aspect of the diocese’s overall catechetical plan. Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists.”¹⁷

12 NDC, no 60.

13 NDC, no. 59 C.

14 See NDC, no. 54 B.

15 NDC, no. 54 C.

16 NDC, no. 59 D.

17 NDC, no. 55 E.

Knowledge and Skills for the Formation of Missionary Disciples

As an essential companion to the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis* continues to serve as the reference point for all aspects of catechetical instruction in the United States including content, pedagogy, and methodology and builds on the themes of the relationship of catechesis to evangelization and worship within the overall process of discipleship.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* outlines important considerations to be aware of, in order that catechesis be evangelizing and fruitful within the process of missionary discipleship. These considerations include:

- Tending the soil in which the seeds of God’s Word are to be planted, including being attentive to the disposition of the souls, preparing catechists, identifying key resources, and cultivating the richness of the environment of the faith community
- Following the divine pedagogy and employing sound human methodologies
- Using faithful communication for telling the Church’s story
- Giving personal witness and testimony to God’s unfailing mercy and love in the catechist’s life and ministry
- Taking the Good News to the periphery and the margins

The Rich Harvest of Missionary Discipleship

A Christian life lived with faith and charity is the most effective form of evangelization and in itself serves as a powerful catechesis. Personal testimony and witness to God’s unfailing mercy in the catechist’s life and ministry holds the power to be transformative in the lives of others. Catechists, who are dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ, provide a powerful and compelling witness to the Gospel as missionary disciples.

It is within families, neighborhoods, communities, and classrooms that catechists encounter those who are not practicing their faith, those who have grown lukewarm in faith, or who do not understand the teachings of Jesus and his Church. For catechists, going out to the margins or the periphery may sometimes mean bringing the light of the Gospel to those they interact with regularly but who are distant from Christ and his Church. As missionary disciples, we are called to cast a wide net so that we can continually invite all those whom we come into contact with into friendship with Christ.

The following materials were developed to assist educational/catechetical leaders at the diocesan, regional, and parish levels. The materials are designed to help leaders promote and equip catechists and Catholic school teachers for faithfulness, excellence, and fruitfulness in evangelizing catechesis as missionary disciples. The work of missionary discipleship for all engaged in the ministry of catechesis is one that is ripe with possibility as Jesus reminds us, “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (Jn 4:35).

Ways to Use This Document

The following resources offer opportunities for reflection, assessment, and ongoing formation of those who have a responsibility and a role in the evangelization and catechesis of others. These documents can be used as

- A set of essential building blocks for designing a diocesan catechetical conference built on the pastoral guidelines of the *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC)
- A resource for a parish catechetical leader in service
- A set of resources to assist as a conversation starter for training master catechists to mentor fellow catechists
- A starter for a small or large group process that follows a keynote address, describing how the NDC provides clear directions for teaching the Faith as found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) & *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (USCCA)
- An in-service for catechists and/or Catholic school staff
- A six-hour in-service for Catholic school teachers and/or parish religious education catechists
- An online model for hard-to-schedule groups or individuals, such as new or veteran diocesan, regional, or parish catechetical leaders, catechists, and Catholic school teachers, and parents serving as formal catechists for home-based programs
- An introductory session on the NDC for new and veteran catechists
- A set of tools for initial and ongoing catechist formation
- A guide for use in parish religious education and school accreditation efforts
- Small faith-sharing resources for those engaged in the work of adult faith formation and evangelization
- Discussion starters for parent nights
- An aid to help focus conversation around a particular catechetical issue or concern

The worksheets that follow provide an assortment of assessment instruments to determine preparation and formation of those already engaged in various ministries of evangelization and catechesis on the parish level. They are designed for use by individuals as well as in small or large group settings. Although written as a small group process for groups of six to eight persons, these worksheets certainly may be helpful for individual use as well. You are encouraged to use them however they may best serve you and those you serve in evangelizing catechetical ministry.

Parish Evangelization

(See NDC, no. 17)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment**

Complete this “Parish Evangelization Worksheet,” rating your parish for its success in addressing the elements of evangelization as listed in the NDC, no. 17, and taken from the US Catholic bishops’ evangelization plan, *Go and Make Disciples*. Use in conjunction with page 2.

	Very Much	Somewhat	Not at All		
1. Parish Educational/Catechetical Leadership understand and are committed to...					
Evangelization of every individual and culture.	1	2	3	4	5
Identifying & knowing cultures found in parish.	1	2	3	4	5
Evangelizing parish cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
Proclaiming the person of Jesus Christ.	1	2	3	4	5
Active participation of every Christian.	1	2	3	4	5
Personal and cultural transformation.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Parish Educational/Catechetical Leadership minister to the stages of evangelization...					
a. pre-evangelization	1	2	3	4	5
b. missionary preaching	1	2	3	4	5
c. initiatory catechesis	1	2	3	4	5
d. mystagogical catechesis	1	2	3	4	5
e. continuing catechesis	1	2	3	4	5
f. liturgical catechesis	1	2	3	4	5
g. theological catechesis	1	2	3	4	5
3. Parish Educational/Catechetical Leadership address the fundamental objectives of the new evangelization regarding...					
a. Personal conversion to Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5
b. Greater knowledge of Scripture & Sacred Tradition	1	2	3	4	5
c. Conversion & renewal of parish especially through implementation of R.C.I.A.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Liturgical renewal that moves people to recognize and celebrate Christ present in word & sacrament, especially the Eucharist	1	2	3	4	5
e. Focusing on evangelizing & communal dimensions of Sunday Eucharist	1	2	3	4	5
f. Integration of daily prayer in lives of parishioners (Liturgy of the Hours, Rosary, Adoration of Blessed Sacrament)	1	2	3	4	5
g. Making parish & other Catholic institutions (i.e. Catholic schools, parish centers) accessible & welcoming	1	2	3	4	5

Evangelization

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Planning**

Using the findings of page 1 as background information, brainstorm, and record as many strategies as you can for how evangelization might occur in your classroom or other catechetical setting for learners across the continuum of stages of faith and maturity from pre-evangelization to theological catechesis.

Evangelization Stage

Strategies for Evangelization

Pre-evangelization

Missionary Preaching

Initiatory Catechesis

Mystagogical Catechesis

Continuing Catechesis

Liturgical Catechesis

Theological Catechesis

Six Tasks of Catechesis

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment and Planning**

The NDC, number 20, identifies the six tasks of catechesis that apply in Catholic schools, parish catechetical programs, and RCIA processes, across the continuum of age groups and institutional settings. Please review the excerpt from the NDC, and then describe how the catechetical plan for your parish or grade level addresses all six of these stages. Don't forget to talk about the various methods used (retreat days and sacramental preparation and celebrations, weekly Mass, religion classes, special projects, Advent/Lenten and other seasonal activities & prayer experiences, Christian service projects, parish functions, etc.). In the sharing, listen especially for new insights or ways that you might address each task and add them to your list.

1. Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.
2. Catechesis promotes a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments.
3. Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ.
4. Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ.
5. Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
6. Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

Inculturating the Gospel in Parish Catechetical Programs

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection**

Keep your catechetical situation clearly in mind as you review the quotes in the “Catechetical Tasks in Inculturation” worksheet that accompanies this sheet. Then read the quote and answer one or more of the questions below. After 5 minutes of individual work time, ask one person from each small group to share a response to one question. Then ask another person to do the same, until all who wish to share have had a turn or time runs out.

QUESTIONS:

Pope Paul VI (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*, no. 63) said:

“Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. But on the other hand, evangelization risks losing its power and disappearing altogether if one empties or adulterates its content under the pretext of translating it.”

1. What is your culture of origin as a Catholic catechist?
2. Who are the people (cultural groups, broadly defined) that make up your parish catechetical program population?
3. What languages are spoken by the diverse communities?
4. What signs and symbols, values and customs speak to each group?
5. How does your catechesis seek to address some of the key questions of the diverse cultures you serve?
6. What are some of the “echos of the word of God” that are found in the cultures of those you serve and need to be identified and affirmed?
7. What are some of the key teachings or practices of the Catholic Church that risk being misunderstood or misapplied by any of these cultures?

Catechetical Tasks in Inculturation

(see NDC, no. 21)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Formation**

Review the seven bullet points below that highlight the catechetical tasks in inculturation. Then follow the directions for completing the worksheet on page 4. These quotes are to aid in answering the reflection questions.

The catechetical tasks in inculturation are:

- “To discover the seed of the Gospel that may be present in the culture
- “To know and respect the essential elements and basic expression of the culture of the persons to whom it is addressed
- “To recognize that the Gospel message is both transcendent and immanent—it is not bound by the limitations of any single human culture, yet it has a cultural dimension, that in which Jesus of Nazareth lived
- “To proclaim the transforming and regenerating force that the Gospel works in every culture
- “To promote a new enthusiasm for the Gospel in accordance with evangelized culture
- “To use the language and culture of the people as a foundation to express the common faith of the Church
- “To maintain the integral content of the faith and avoid obscuring the content of the Christian message by adaptations that would compromise or diminish the deposit of faith”

Nine Criteria for Authentic Catechesis

(NDC, no. 25)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection, Assessment, and Planning**

In chapter 3 (pages 75-87), the *National Directory for Catechesis* names nine criteria for the authentic presentation of the Christian message. Each participant is asked to give one or two examples of how their parish catechetical program addresses each of the nine criteria for authentic catechesis listed below. Then each participant is asked to assign a number to each criterion using the following assessment scale:

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this well. We need to continue to improve on this.

1 = We do this better now than in the past, but it continues to be an area of challenge and growth for us.

Based on feedback from small group members, the group is asked to brainstorm strategies to help fellow catechists turn the criteria rated as “1s” into “3s.”

Criteria	Rating	Examples
“Centers on Jesus Christ		
“Introduces the Trinitarian dimension of the Gospel message		
“Proclaims the Good News of salvation and liberation		
“Comes from and leads to the Church		
“Has a historical character		
“Seeks inculturation and preserves the integrity and purity of the message		
“Offers the comprehensive message of the Gospel and respects its inherent hierarchy of truths		
“Communicates the profound dignity of the human person		
“Fosters a common language of the faith” (e.g., biblical, creedal, liturgical, doctrinal)		

Divine Pedagogy and Human Methodology

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Continuing Formation**

Review the content below, and proceed to pages 8-9.

Divine Pedagogy (NDC, nos. 27-28)

—God’s process of revelation incarnated in Jesus is the model for our catechesis

- Presents God’s loving plan for all
- Gathers & forms groups of disciples
- Inculturates the message for his hearers
- Respects their freedom
- Engages them in accepting & interpreting revelation
- Invites them into community
- Draws on the power of the Holy Spirit

Human Methodology (NDC, no. 29, A-H)

—2 chief methods: Inductive/deductive

—8 Methodologies

- Human experience
- Discipleship
- Christian community
- Family
- Witness of catechist
- Learning by heart (see NDC, p. 103, for list)
- Christian living
- Apprenticeship in the faith

—Tap the power of mass media to proclaim the Gospel

Divine Pedagogy and Human Methodology

Read the NDC quote (NDC no. 29, A-H) for each of the eight methodologies proposed. Then respond to one or more questions that follow. After individuals have had a few minutes to work, those who are willing are invited to share answers with one another.

1. Learning through human experience: “Catechesis links human experience to the revealed word of God, helping people ascribe Christian meaning to their own existence. It enables people to explore, interpret, and judge their basic experience in light of the Gospel.”

How do you incorporate this methodology in your catechesis?

2. Learning by *discipleship*: “Catechesis nourishes a living, explicit, and fruitful faith lived in discipleship to Jesus Christ . . . Children are capable of being formed as disciples of the Lord from an early age.”

How does your catechesis enable your learners to be centered on the person of Jesus Christ and to live Christ’s message more faithfully?

3. Learning *within the Christian community*: “The parish is the place where the Christian faith is first received, expressed, and nourished . . . where Christian faith deepens and Christian community is formed . . . where the community becomes aware of being the people of God. . . where the faithful are nurtured by the word of God and nourished by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist . . . where the faithful are sent on their apostolic mission in the world.”

How do you help your learners learn about, identify with, and become engaged in and active in the life of their parish community?

4. Learning *within the Christian family*: “The Christian family is ordinarily the first experience of the Christian community and the primary environment for growth in faith. As the ‘domestic church,’ it is a place in which the word of God is received, where parents are the primary educators and first heralds of the faith . . . where a sense of God’s loving presence is awakened and faith in Jesus Christ is confessed, encouraged, and lived . . . where children first learn basic prayers and form their consciences in light of the teachings of Christ and the Church.”

How do you affirm the crucial role of parents and the family in faith formation and utilize this methodology in your catechesis?

5. Learning *through the witness of the catechist*: “Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catechists powerfully influence those being catechized by their faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transparent example of their Christian lives. For catechesis to be effective, catechists must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. They must firmly believe in his Gospel and its power to transform lives.”

How is this methodology present in your catechesis? Would your learners describe your teaching as a faithful witness to Jesus’ message? Do they experience you as fully committed to Jesus Christ?

6. *Learning by heart*: “While the content of the faith cannot be reduced to formulas that are repeated without being properly understood, learning by heart has had a special place in catechesis and should continue to have that place in catechesis today . . . What is essential is that the texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and the community level.” (see NDC, p. 103 for a detailed listing of formulations to learn by heart)

How do you use this methodology with your learners? Is “learning by heart” incorporated in the entire curriculum and reinforced from year to year for the continuum of age groups and settings?

7. *Making a commitment to live the Christian life*: “The active participation of all the catechized in their Christian formation fosters learning by doing . . . praying, celebrating the sacraments and the Liturgy, living the Christian life, fostering works of charity and justice, and promoting virtues . . . The participation of adults in their own catechetical formation is essential, since they have the fullest capacity to understand the truths of the faith and live the Christian life.”

How do you help your participants to move beyond a simple understanding of their faith and embrace the Christian life as their lifestyle? How do you foster in your participants a commitment to live the Christian life in all its fullness?

8. *Learning by Apprenticeship*: Beyond mere instruction, catechesis “must be an integral Christian initiation. Learning by apprenticeship ordinarily includes the profession of faith, education in the knowledge of the faith, celebration of the mysteries of the faith, practice of the Christian moral virtues, and dedication to the daily patterns of Christian prayer. It is a guided encounter with the entire Christian life, a journey toward conversion to Christ . . . a school for discipleship.”

How do you link an experienced Christian with someone seeking to know and follow the Lord? Can you think of any examples of such an apprenticeship in ordinary parish life? Who are experienced faithful Catholics who might be tapped to serve as mentors in this apprenticeship? Who might be the apprentices searching for such a guided encounter in your classroom or other catechetical setting?

Pastor as Catechetical Leader

(See NDC, no. 54 B.1)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection**

As the bishop's closest collaborator, the pastor has specific responsibilities that derive from his catechetical role. In parishes with no resident pastor, pastoral administrators have the same obligation. There are five overarching duties:

1. Suitable catechesis is provided for the celebration of the sacraments (NDC no. 35 A-B).
2. Children are prepared properly for the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation (NDC no. 35 C-D).
3. Deep ongoing sacramental formation is provided (NDC no. 36 A).
4. Catechetical formation is provided to persons with special needs as far as their condition permits (NDC, nos. 36 A.3, b-3, and 61.1).
5. Ongoing formation in faith of youth and adults through various means and endeavors is provided (NDC, no. 61 A, B.1).

And nine additional duties follow:

- Age-appropriate catechetical opportunities for adults, youth, and children are provided (NDC, no. 61 A.2-4b).
- A total parish catechetical plan is developed and implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership (NDC, no. 58, no. 60 A, no. 61 B.5).
- Catechesis for adults of all ages is a priority (NDC, no. 61 A.2-4).
- The catechesis of youth and young adults is situated within a comprehensive plan for youth ministry in the parish (NDC, no. 61 A.5)
- Catechists at all levels are well-formed and trained for this task (NDC, no. 54 B.8-10, nos. 55-56).
- Catechetical formation is available for all language groups.
- The baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish (NDC, no. 61 A.6).
- The catechumenate is an essential process in the parish, one that serves as the inspiration of all catechesis (NDC, no. 61 A.6).
- The pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met (NDC, no. 54 B.1, nos. 60-61 A).

Strategies for the Pastor as Catechetical Leader

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment and Planning**

The NDC, published by the bishops of the United States in 2005, describes a broad responsibility for the pastor as a key parish catechetical leader. “The pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met” (NDC, no. 54 B.1). Using this NDC worksheet, the pastor will assess the state of his parish catechetical efforts and indicate a score of “3,” or “2,” or “1,” where

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this fairly well. We need to continue to improve on this.

1 = This area needs attention. Much improvement is needed.

Depending on the assessment outcome, the pastor will select the most strategic responses to his assessment of the weakest parish catechetical area(s) for future attention. Strategies include: reading the suggested sections in the NDC, holding one or more study days (might include participation by parish staff, parish council, catechetical leaders from all settings and age groups), drafting a parish catechetical plan, or doing periodic evaluation of parish catechetical programs.

Element	NDC	Rating	Strategy
Suitable catechesis is provided for the celebration of the sacraments.	no. 35, A-B		
Children are prepared properly for the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation.	no. 35 C-D		
Ongoing sacramental formation is provided.	no. 36 A		
Catechetical formation is provided to persons with special needs as far as their condition permits.	no. 36 A.3b-3, 6.1.1		
Ongoing formation in faith of youth and adults through various means and endeavors.	no. 61 A, B.1		
Age-appropriate catechetical opportunities for adults, youth, and children are provided.	no. 61 A.2-4b		

Element	NDC	Rating	Strategy
A total parish catechetical plan is developed and implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership.	no. 58, no. 60 A, no. 61 B.5		
Catechesis for adults of all ages is a priority.	no. 61 A.2-4		
The catechesis of youth and young adults is situated within a comprehensive plan for youth ministry in the parish.	no. 61 A.5		
Catechists at all levels are well-formed and trained for this task.	no. 4 B.8-10, 55-56		
Catechetical formation is available for all language groups.	no. 54 B.1		
The baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish.	no. 61 A.6		
The catechumenate is an essential process in the parish, one that serves as the inspiration of all catechesis.	no. 61 A.6		
The pastor has the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated, and met.	no. 54 1, 60-61 A		

Priests

Educators in the Faith by Virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

(NDC, no. 54 B.2)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection and Planning**

Review the role of priests in support of catechists. If possible, discuss ways in which the parochial vicar might wish to be the catechist of catechists.

Priest—“Catechist of catechists”

- Supports the pastor, as requested, in addressing his catechetical responsibilities
- Collaborates with parish catechetical leaders in formation of catechists by
 - Fostering in parishioners’ recognition for the mission of the catechist and a shared responsibility for catechesis
 - Ensuring that parish catechetical programs are systematic and complete
 - Recruiting catechists
 - Providing catechist formation and celebrating the sacraments with classes or groups
 - Praying for catechists
 - Integrating catechesis with evangelization
 - Fostering a link between catechesis, sacraments, and liturgy
 - Being informed of and ensuring a good connection between parish & diocesan catechetical efforts
- Maintains and enriches his ministry as catechist by pursuing his own catechetical and spiritual formation before and after ordination
- Seminarian and priestly formation should include training in theoretical and practical principles informing catechetical ministry, including cultural diversity and organization and supervision of parish catechetical programs
- Those not “native-born” should learn about US culture

The Priest as Catechist of Catechists

For those parishes blessed with a parochial vicar, the NDC provides direction for their catechetical role in support of their pastors. While not exhaustive, here are a few ways that priests may collaborate with parish catechetical leaders or principals in formation and oversight of parish catechetical efforts.

1. Be knowledgeable of the parish catechetical plan, whether implicit or explicit
2. Assist collaboratively in multiple ways with catechist recruitment and formation
3. Provide catechist/teacher training as needed and outlined in the diocesan catechist formation guidelines
4. Provide assistance with catechist/teacher in services, retreats, and prayer experiences
5. Work with the parish catechetical leader(s)/principals and catechists/teachers to periodically visit the parish catechetical/Catholic school program(s)
6. Preside at special sacramental and devotional prayer services
7. Actively pray with and for catechists and Catholic school teachers
8. Participate, as needed, in the parish RCIA as an occasional resource or a regular team member
9. Participate as catechist in various other parish formation programs (e.g. baptismal prep, marriage prep, youth or young adult ministry)

Liturgical Catechesis

(See NDC, nos. 32–34, 37–38)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection and Formation**

Review the NDC quotes, numbers 32-34 and 37-38. Respond individually to one or more of the questions. Then those who are willing are invited to share answers with the group.

1. *Relationship Between Catechesis & Liturgy*: “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows . . . Catechesis both precedes the Liturgy and springs from it. It prepares people for a full, conscious, and active participation in the Liturgy by helping them understand its nature, rites, and symbols . . . Liturgical catechesis aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ . . . by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the ‘sacraments’ to the ‘mysteries’ . . . sacramental life is impoverished and very soon turns into hollow ritualism if it is not based on serious knowledge of the meaning of the sacraments, and catechesis becomes intellectualized if it fails to come alive in sacramental practice.”

- (A) As you reflect upon your parish religious education curriculum, when during the year do you address the nature, rites, and symbols of the liturgy?
- (B) How do you provide a healthy balance between *information* about the Liturgy and sacramental life of the Church and *experiences* of celebrating the prayer of the Church?
- (C) Given that a significant portion of Catholic families reports that they do not attend weekly Mass, what strategies do you use to encourage sacramental practice among your students and their families?
- (D) How might you use materials like *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, *The Directory for Masses with Children*, *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, and other such resources to help your learners understand the nature, rites, and symbols of the sacraments?

2. *Liturgical and Personal Prayer*: “Prayer is the basis and expression of the vital and personal relationship of a human person with the living and true God . . . The sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are the Church’s preeminent experiences of liturgical prayer . . . The Liturgy of the Hours, or the Divine Office, is the daily public prayer of the Church . . . Personal prayer is nourished by various devotional prayers, such as the Holy Rosary, Stations of the Cross, and novenas . . . Catechesis for prayer emphasizes the major purposes of prayer—adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and contrition—and includes various prayer forms: communal prayer, private prayer, traditional prayer, spontaneous prayer, gesture, song, meditation, and contemplation . . . From infancy they (children) should be inculcated into the daily prayer life of the family.” See also NDC, number 29 F, for prayer formula to learn by heart.

- (A) If you were to survey your students/inquirers and their families on their daily prayer life, what sort of prayer vocabulary and background would they have?
- (B) Is that enough to “express and foster a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God”?
- (C) What might you do to assist your learners/inquirers and their families in daily prayer and the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist?
- (D) How do you incorporate teaching about the Church’s liturgical cycle, church architecture, liturgical music, sacramentals, and the relationship between sacramental life, devotions, and popular piety?

Sacramental Catechesis

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment**

Review “General Principles of Sacramental Catechesis,” (NDC, no. 35 B), in the left column below. List one or two examples of how your parish catechesis addresses each criterion below. Then assign a number to each criterion using the following assessment scale:

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this well. We need to continue to improve on this.

1 = We do this better now than in the past, but it continues to be an area of challenge and growth for us.

Share your answers with the group. If time allows, brainstorm strategies for how you might turn your “1s” into “3s.”

General Principles of Sacramental Catechesis	Rating	Examples
1. It “is comprehensive & systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith.”		
2. It “is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God.”		
3. It “presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit. ”		
4. It “is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized.”		
5. It “is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith as much as possible.”		
6. It “involves parents in the preparation of their children for the sacraments.”		
7. It “is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program.”		
8. It “focuses primarily on symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament.”		
9. It “enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebration.”		
10. It continues beyond initial preparation for first sacrament reception to unfold the meaning and depth of each sacrament for individuals as they age and mature.		

Moral Catechesis

(NDC, no. 42 E)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment**

Review NDC, no. 42 E, “Challenges to Communicate These Fundamental Realities,” listed below.

Keeping your Catholic school or parish catechetical programs clearly in mind:

1. Put a (✓) check mark next to all those catechetical points that you think are *adequately to very well treated* in your program/process currently.
2. Put a (−) minus sign next to those points that are touched on but *need to be more fully addressed*.
3. Put an (X) next to those points that are *not currently addressed* at all.

As a group, share your areas of catechetical strength and need with regard to moral catechesis. Then, if time allows, brainstorm some teaching strategies to address those areas of moral catechesis *not yet adequately addressed*.

“To communicate these fundamental moral teachings in ways that are persuasive and fruitful, dioceses and parishes should present catechesis that:

- “Restores a sense of the sacred and transcendent in life
- “Reassures the faithful that God is present to all and offers his grace to each one
- “Prompts the faithful to cooperate with God’s grace and live in communion with the Holy Trinity
- “Convinces believers that, through Baptism, God shares his own life with them, adopts them as his own children, forgives their sins, and sustains them in his unfailing love
- “Encourages and models dependence on God
- “Disposes the faithful to live in harmony with God and the created order
- “Encourages the faithful to understand that true happiness is communion with God, not material, social, or political success
- “Assists the faithful in developing their capacity to discern God’s will, becoming ever more ready and able to choose the greater good
- “Encourages the faithful to commit themselves to a deep personal relationship with Christ
- “Encourages believers to encounter Christ frequently in the celebration of the sacraments
- “Helps the faithful to recognize and obey the law that is based on universal truths revealed by God and inscribed by him in their hearts
- “Teaches the norms and principles of Christian morality in devoted adherence to the Church’s leadership
- “Helps believers to understand that true freedom involves doing what ought to be done
- “Helps believers to form their consciences through careful consideration of the life and teachings of Christ and the Church, the advice of competent people, and the help of the Holy Spirit
- “Helps the faithful to identify sins of commission and sins of omission
- “Helps believers to identify the effects of original, personal and social sin
- “Helps believers to recognize that sin can deter or prevent them from achieving their lifetime goal: union with God
- “Helps the faithful to make concrete moral judgments by applying the principles of Christian morality to the ordinary situations of everyday life
- “Helps believers to persevere in the pursuit of virtues
- “Reaches out in love to those who seem not to respond”

Children's Catechesis

(Pre-K to 4th Grade)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Ongoing Formation**

Break into small groups. Spend 3-5 minutes reflecting on your responses to the following catechetical goals. Feel free to jot down any notes you wish to make. Then invite all those who are willing in your small group to share responses for the first section. When done, repeat the process for the second section.

1. Review the following tasks of the catechesis of children (NDC, pages 205-6). Put a check by those that strike you as most important for a catechist to address. Select 2 or 3 tasks which you feel strongest about and share why you feel so strongly.

___ To “understand children, communicate with them, listen to them with respect, be sensitive to their circumstances, and be aware of their current values”

___ To “recognize that children have a dignity of their own and that they are important not only for what they will do in the future, but for who they are now”

___ To “encourage them to know and respect other cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic groups, and use catechetical materials that are adapted to accommodate cultural, racial, and ethnic pluralism; the concerns of particular groups; and persons with special needs”

___ To “understand that the child’s comprehension and other powers develop gradually, and present religious truths in greater depth and propose more mature challenges as the capacity for understanding and growth in faith increases”

___ To “provide experiences in which they can live faith and apply the message of salvation to real-life situations; encourage the use of imagination, as well as intelligence and memory”

___ To “provide experiences that link Liturgy and catechesis and promote appreciation for the community celebration of the Eucharist”

___ To “stimulate not only exterior but also interior activity—a prayerful response from the heart”

___ To “foster a sense of community that is an important part of education for social life”

2. Please list some key indicators to verify that a catechist is treating the presentation of the Christian message with the same seriousness and depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge (e.g., catechist is well-prepared, catechist is knowledgeable of the catechetical subject).

Catechetical Guidelines

(Grades 5 to 8)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Ongoing Formation and Planning**

Spend 3-5 minutes reflecting on your responses to the following catechetical goals. Feel free to jot down any notes you wish to make. Then, invite each member in your small group, who is willing, to share her/his responses for the first section. When done, repeat the process for the remaining sections.

1. Review the following tasks of the catechesis of children (NDC, pages 205-206). Put a check by those that strike you as most important for a catechist to address. Select 2 or 3 tasks which you feel strongest about, and share why you feel so strongly.
 - To “understand children, communicate with them, listen to them with respect, be sensitive to their circumstances, and be aware of their current values”
 - To “recognize that children have dignity of their own and that they are important not only for what they will do in the future, but for who they are now”
 - To “encourage them to know and respect other cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic groups, and use catechetical materials that are adapted to accommodate cultural, racial, and ethnic pluralism; the concerns of particular groups; and persons with special needs”
 - To “understand that the child’s comprehension and other powers develop gradually, and to present religious truths in greater depth and to propose more mature challenges as the capacity for understanding and growth in faith increases”
 - To “provide experiences in which they can live faith and apply the message of salvation to real-life situations; encourage the use of imagination, as well as intelligence and memory”
 - To “provide experiences that link Liturgy and catechesis and promote appreciation for the community celebration of the Eucharist”
 - To “stimulate not only exterior but interior activity—a prayerful response from the heart”
 - To “foster a sense of community that is an important part of education for social life”
2. Prioritize these 3 tasks for catechesis of older children, from *most* to *least* important.
 - To “assist them in the praxis of observing, exploring, interpreting, and evaluating their experiences; in learning to ascribe a Christian meaning to their lives; and in learning to act according to the norms of faith and love—the presence in today’s society of many conflicting values makes it all the more important to help young people to interiorize authentic values”
 - To “emphasize that growth in faith includes growth in the desire for a deeper, more mature knowledge of the truths of faith”
 - To “present private prayer as a means of ‘individual reflection and personal communication with God’”
3. Please describe some key indicators to verify that a catechist is treating the presentation of the Christian message with the same seriousness and depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge (e.g., catechist is well-prepared, catechist is knowledgeable of subject).

High School Catechetical Guidelines

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Ongoing Formation and Planning**

Spend 3-5 minutes reflecting on your responses to each of the following catechetical goals. Feel free to jot down any notes you wish to make. Then, invite each member of your small group, who is willing, to share her/his response for the first section. When done, repeat the process for the second section.

1. Review the following tasks of the catechesis of adolescents (NDC, pages 201-202). Put a check by those that strike you as most important for a Catechist to address. Select 2 or 3 tasks which you feel strongest about and share why you feel so strongly.
 - ___ “Teaches the core content of the Catholic faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church—the profession of faith, celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ, and Christian prayer—in order to provide a solid foundation for continued growth in faith
 - ___ “Recognizes that faith development is lifelong and therefore provides developmentally appropriate content and processes around key themes of Catholic faith that respond to the age-appropriate needs, interests, and concerns of younger and older adolescents
 - ___ “Integrates knowledge of the faith with liturgical and prayer experiences and the development of practical skills for living the Catholic faith in today’s world
 - ___ “Utilizes the life experiences of adolescents, fostering a shared dialogue between the life of the adolescent—with his or her joys, struggles, questions, concerns, and hopes—and the wisdom of the Catholic Church
 - ___ “Engages adolescents in the learning process by incorporating a variety of learning methods and activities through which adolescents can explore and learn important religious concepts of the Scriptures and Catholic faith— a variety of learning approaches, including music and media, keeps interest alive among adolescents and responds to their different learning styles
 - ___ “Involves group participation in an environment that is characterized by warmth, trust, acceptance, and care, so that young people can hear and respond to God’s call
 - ___ Fosters “the freedom to search and question, to express one’s own point of view, and to respond in faith to that call
 - ___ “Provides for real-life application of learning by helping adolescents to apply their learning to living more faithfully as Catholic adolescents, considering the next steps that they will take and the obstacles they will face
 - ___ “Promotes family faith development through parish and school programs by providing parent education programs and resources, incorporating a family perspective in catechetical programming, and providing parent-adolescent and intergenerational catechetical programming
 - ___ “Promotes Christian attitudes toward human sexuality
 - ___ “Recognizes and celebrates multicultural diversity within the Church’s unity by including stories, songs, dances, feasts, values, rituals, saints, and heroes from the rich heritage of various cultures
 - ___ “Incorporates a variety of program approaches, including parish and school programs; small-group programs; home-based programs, activities and resources; one-on-one and mentoring programs; and independent or self-directed programs or activities
 - ___ “Explicitly invites young people to explore the possibility of a personal call to ministry and the beauty of the total gift of self for the sake of the kingdom based on a prayerful reflection within the celebration of sacraments (e.g., Penance & Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist).”
2. Please list some key indicators to verify that a catechist is treating the presentation of the Christian message with the same seriousness and depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge (e.g. a well-prepared catechist; a catechist who is knowledgeable of subject).

Tasks of Adult Catechesis

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment and Planning**

Review the major tasks of adult catechesis (NDC, pages 189-190), which are listed below. Indicate the extent to which your parish adult faith formation program is addressing each item on the list as follows.

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this well. We need to continue to improve on this.

1 = We do this better now than in the past, but it continues to be an area of challenge and growth for us.

Share your answers with the group. If time allows, brainstorm strategies for how you might turn your “1s” into “3s.”

Tasks of Adult Catechesis	Rating	Examples
1. “To promote formation and development of life in the Risen Christ through the sacraments, prayer life of the Church, works of charity and justice, retreats, and spiritual direction		
2. “To promote evangelization as the means of bringing the Good News to all states of humanity		
3. “To educate toward the development of an informed moral conscience		
4. “To clarify religious and moral questions		
5. “To clarify the relationship between the Church and the world, especially in light of the Church’s social doctrine		
6. “To develop the rational foundations of the faith and demonstrate the compatibility of faith and reason		
7. “To encourage adults to assume their baptismal responsibility for the Church’s mission and to be able to give Christian witness in society’		
8. “To develop creative ways to interest and encourage adults to take advantage of the various programs of enrichment and spiritual development being offered”		

Catechetical Methodology for Adults

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Assessment and Planning**

Review the notes on adult methodologies, which are listed below. Indicate the extent to which your parish adult faith formation program employs appropriate methodologies in developing and providing adult faith formation.

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this well. We need to continue to improve on this.

1 = We do this better now than in the past, but it continues to be an area of challenge and growth for us.

Share your answers with the group. If time allows, brainstorm strategies for how you might turn your “1s” into “3s.”

Adult Methodologies	Rating	Examples
1. Adult learners should be involved in identifying their own catechetical needs and with planning to meet those needs.		
2. Adult faith formation (AFF) leaders should identify the characteristics of adult Catholics, develop catechetical objectives based on those characteristics, and design a plan to meet those objectives		
3. AFF leaders should determine the most effective methods and choose a variety of formats and models (e.g., systematic and occasional, individual and community, organized and spontaneous)		
4. AFF leaders should recruit and train catechists of adults		
5. Adult catechesis should respect the experiences of adults and make use of their personal experiences, skills, and talents		
6. Adult catechesis should be based on the circumstances of those to whom it is addressed		
7. Adult catechesis should recognize and address the specific conditions of lay Catholics and call them to holiness and to seek the Kingdom of God in their temporal affairs		
8. The whole community should be involved as a welcoming and supportive environment for adult catechesis		
9. Adult catechesis should include a variety of learning activities (liturgies, scripture reading and study, retreats and prayer experiences, family or home-centered activities, ecumenical dialogue, individual/small/large group activities		
10. Adult catechesis should involve the learners as teachers and learners		

Parish Catechists of Children as Partners with Parents and Families

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Reflection**

Read the quote and then spend 3-5 minutes reflecting on your responses to each of the following questions. Feel free to jot down any notes you wish to make. Then, invite members of your small group, who are willing, to share their response for the first question. When done, repeat the process for the second and third questions.

The NDC calls for a serious partnership with parents and families in catechesis:

- Parents are the primary educators (no. 29 D)
- “From infancy, (children) should be inculturated into the daily prayer life of the family” (no. 34)
- Catechesis is needed for parents & families (no. 48 A.4)
- Nothing replaces family catechesis (no. 48 E)
- Pastors have a serious obligation to assist parents (no. 48 E.2)
- Adult catechesis helps parents and families nourish their own faith

QUESTIONS:

1. How might you strengthen the partnership between the parish catechetical program and the parents and families it serves?
2. What sorts of support do parents/guardians need from their parish catechetical program and catechists to allow their homes to become true “schools of Christ,” building a “new civilization of love”?
3. Name some of the ways that you, as a catechist, might assist the parents/guardians of your students in inculturating their sons and daughters from birth onwards in the Church’s liturgical and personal prayer?

Key Functions of the Parish Catechetical Office

(NDC, nos. 60-61)

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Ongoing Formation and Assessment**

Using the following worksheets, review the key functions of a parish catechetical office, and assess whether each task is satisfactorily “done,” “in process” of being completed, or “not started” as of yet in your parish program(s). If time allows, identify one function presently marked as “not started” that you intend to implement in the coming year. Brainstorm some of the implications of adopting this new function.

Function	Done	In Progress	Not Started
Keep the parish mindful of its mission to evangelize.			
Ensure lifelong catechesis with special attention to the priority of adult catechesis.			
Analyze catechetical needs.			
Integrate catechesis (within school) with the parish’s pastoral plan for Catholic education & prepare parish catechetical personnel to do the same.			
Collaborate with youth ministry in planning and providing catechesis for adolescents.			
Reach out to evangelize and recruit un-evangelized, under-evangelized, and non-participating individuals and families.			
Consider and oversee options for family-centered and home-based programs for children.			
Consider and oversee options for small Christian communities.			
Collaborate with all shareholders (e.g., pastor, staff including school principal, parish education/ catechetical committee) in developing parish catechetical plan.			
Follow diocesan curriculum guide based on conformity with GDC/NDC/CCC.			

Function	Done	In Progress	Not Started
Implement diocesan guidelines for organization of lifelong parish catechesis, baptismal catechumenate, other sacramental preparation, and resourcing parish catechists. Follow diocesan norms for accreditation, certification, and ongoing development of parish catechetical leaders.			
Maintain parish records on those receiving formal catechetical instruction, the personnel involved in training, the type and hours of instruction provided, and the service and worship components.			
Provide catechist commissioning rites, recognition, and affirmation.			
Keep catechists informed of important church documents on catechesis.			
Provide periodic evaluation of parish catechetical programs re: cognitive, affective, and behavioral objectives.			
Provide personnel and resources to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.			
Collaborate with the pastor and the diocese in recruiting, training, and resourcing parish catechists.			

Catechist Checklist

This worksheet assists parish leaders in: **Ongoing Formation and Assessment**

This checklist is intended to assist catechists in identifying and cultivating key characteristics they need to faithfully and effectively proclaim the Good News. Please rate yourself on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 indicating “no growth” and 5 indicating “strong growth.” For more information on characteristics, see the reference cited next to each characteristic.

Abbreviations: *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC); *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States* (OHWB); *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC)

Characteristics	Catechist
<i>Maturity of faith</i> (GDC, no. 82)	
Living faith (OHWB, nos. 50-54)	
Explicit faith (OHWB, nos. 55-59)	
Fruitful faith (OHWB, nos. 60-63)	
<i>Knowledge about Jesus</i> (NDC, nos. 19-20)	
Love of Jesus & his message (NDC, no. 19A)	
Commitment to follow Jesus (NDC, no. 19A)	
Knowledge of faith (NDC, no. 20, 1)	
Consistent participation in the Mass & the sacraments (NDC, no. 20, 2)	
Understanding of the liturgy (NDC, no. 20, 2)	
Understanding of the sacraments (NDC, no. 20, 2)	
Ability to apply the Two Great Commandments and the Ten Commandments to one’s daily life (NDC, no. 20, 3)	
Ability to apply the Beatitudes to one’s daily life (NDC, no. 20, 3)	
Life choices reflect life of a disciple (NDC, no. 20, 3)	
Participation in parish life: prayer, worship, study, service, and social time (NDC, no. 20, 4-5)	
Witness to others about Jesus and his message (NDC, no. 20, 6)	
<i>Are faithful witnesses</i> (NDC, no. 25)	
Witness is centered on Jesus Christ (NDC, no. 25)	
Witness is Trinitarian (NDC, no. 25 B)	
Witness celebrates salvation & liberation through Christ Jesus (NDC, no. 25 C)	
Witness is ecclesial (NDC, no. 25 D)	
Witness reflects God’s action throughout history (NDC, no. 25 E)	
Witness is faithfully inculturated (NDC, no. 25 F)	

Characteristics	Catechist
Witness is comprehensive, as in the Nicene Creed (NDC, no. 25 G)	
Witness affirms human dignity and vocation (NDC, no. 25 H)	
Witness uses creedal language (NDC, no. 25 I)	
Witness uses liturgical language (NDC, no. 25 I)	
Witness uses doctrinal language (NDC, no. 25 I)	
Witness uses biblical language (NDC, no. 25 I)	
<i>Witness imitates Jesus' approach to form disciples</i> (NDC, no. 28)	
Witness helps others reflect on their life experience in light of the Gospel (NDC, no. 29 A)	
Witness engages others in <i>being</i> disciples (NDC, no. 29 B)	
Witness helps others benefit from and connect with parish life (NDC, no. 29 C)	
Witness engages families in giving witness to and practicing the faith (NDC, no. 29 D)	
Witness' life is consistent with the gospel message (NDC, no. 29 E)	
Witness includes learning by heart (NDC, no. 29 F)	
Witness encourages self/others to learn by living their faith (NDC, no. 29 G)	
Witness links others with saints (NDC, no. 29 H)	
Witness links others with seasoned Catholic mentors as appropriate (NDC, no. 29 H)	
<i>Witness leads to greater hunger for God</i> (NDC, nos. 28, 34, 40)	
Witness is served by an active prayer life (NDC, no. 34)	
Witness is served by weekly participation in Sunday Mass and worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist (NDC, no. 36 A, 3)	
Witness is served by regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (NDC, no. 36 B, 1)	
Witness is served by knowledge of the liturgical year (NDC, no. 37 A)	
Witness is served by sacred art (NDC, no. 37 B)	
Witness is enriched by use of sacred music (NDC, no. 37 B, 3)	
Witness is served by knowledge of church architecture (NDC, no. 37 B, 2)	
Witness is served by knowledge of Catholic social teaching (NDC, no. 43 C & D)	
Witness encourages others to embrace the Church's mission as their own (NDC, no. 55 A & E)	
Witness relies on the Holy Spirit (NDC, no. 73)	
Witness looks to Mary as model for catechists (NDC, no. 74)	