

General Directory for Catechesis
Six Tasks of Catechesis

Prompting Knowledge of the Faith

- Catechesis must lead to “the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan,” by introducing the disciple of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and of Scripture.
- By deepening knowledge of the faith, catechesis nourishes not only the life of faith but equips it to explain itself to the world.
- If a person is to enter into and grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ, he or she must come to Christ and understand his mission. Spirituality is all about this relationship.
- We learn about Jesus through the teaching tradition of the church, the Scriptures, the creed, the prayers, and the liturgical texts.
- It is the task of catechesis to teach inquirers and believers the essential beliefs of the Catholic Christian faith.
- Our tradition needs to be shared lovingly, systematically, and appropriately with believers of all ages.

Questions for Reflection

1. What programs and resources are in place in your community to assist people in obtaining knowledge of their faith?
2. What opportunities are there for the study of Scripture?
3. What activities take place in your community that bring the Creed to life?
4. How has the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* been used to promote knowledge of the faith?
5. How do people learn about these opportunities?

Liturgical Education

- Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist.
- Catechesis, along with promoting a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, must also educate the disciple 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.
- A person cannot go very far into knowledge and relationship without finding a need to express it.
- When a person enters into and grows in a relationship, there is a ritual expression of affection such as an exchange of gifts, special words, a special song, and perhaps a public ritual of commitment.
- The public nature of this worship states that there is a community of believers who share a relationship and need to grow and be nurtured in their spirit.
- Liturgical education involves knowing how the Church prays and recognizing that we are catechized through these celebrations.

Questions for Reflection

1. How are the members of your community educated about the celebration of the Eucharist?
2. How are community members educated so as to engage in full, conscious, active participation in the celebration of Eucharistic liturgy?
3. How are young people and adults educated about the sacraments?
4. How does your community prepare people to celebrate other forms of public prayer?
5. What attention is given to what is learned by the way your community celebrates liturgy?

Moral Formation

- Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master himself.
- The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue, and impresses upon it the spirit of the beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today.
- Conversion to Jesus Christ implies putting on Christ. Moral formation teaches us to live as Jesus lived.
- The moral formation of the church is the foundation for moral decision-making, which is a way of life to be modeled and witnessed in the world.
- The moral testimony, which is prepared for by catechesis, must always demonstrate the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel.
- This is why Catholic social teaching is such a vital part of catechesis for moral formation.

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you consider the moral and social implications of living a life apprenticed to Jesus?
2. How do members of your community learn about the moral and social consequences of living the Christian life?
3. What opportunities exist to discuss the moral implications of living a Christian life?
4. What opportunities exist for people to talk about the counter-cultural aspects of being a Christian?
5. What opportunities are there for people to engage in and reflect on Christian service?
6. What opportunities exist for people to gather and read and discuss the Church's social teaching?

Teaching to Pray

- Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had
- To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father:
 - Adoration
 - Praise
 - Thanksgiving
 - Filial confidence
 - Supplication
 - Awe for his glory
- *Our Father* is the model of all Christian prayer
- *Handing on of the Our Father* is a summary of the entire Gospel and is therefore a true act of catechesis
- When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit
- A person cannot stay and grow in a committed relationship without communication
- Teaching Catholics to pray consists of encouraging them to speak often and informally to Jesus as well as taking the time to listen
- Our prayer is a whole tradition of communication and way of being that needs to be taught
- Over 2, 000 years the church has developed patterns and forms for this “prayer-communications”, some in formal prayer and ritual, some not
- While learning the prayers of our tradition is essential, living all life consciously aware of God’s presence is no less important
- Prayer is vital to our spirituality; it is “food for the spirit”

Questions for Reflection

1. How are children and adults in your community taught to pray?
2. What prayer groups or faith sharing groups are there in your community that people can join?
3. How are these groups formed? If they do not exist, how would you go about starting them?
4. How is access given to the many rich expressions of prayer in the Church – the rosary, Ignatian prayer, centering prayer, Scripture reflection, guided meditation, and so on?
5. How are traditional and contemporary ways of prayer taught and encouraged?

Education for Community Life

- Christian community life is not realized spontaneously. It is necessary to educate it carefully.
- Done by means of an apprenticeship that witnesses to
 - A spirit of simplicity and humility
 - Solicitude for “the least”
 - Concerns for the alienated
 - Fraternal correction
 - Mutual forgiveness
- In developing this community sense, catechesis takes special note of the ecumenical dimension and encourages fraternal attitudes toward members of other Christian churches
- This spirit of ecumenism is instilled through
 - Arousing and nourishing “a true desire for unity”
 - Encouraging friendly attitudes toward other Christian communities
- We learn the faith, we worship together, we espouse and live a value system, we communicate with God, and we grow not only in our relationship with Jesus but also with each other
- We grow in our spirituality by learning and assimilating the behavior and attitudes of the community
- Effective catechesis prepares people to live in community
- In developing this community sense, catechesis encourages an attitude of love toward our brothers and sisters in other Christian churches.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are three ways community is fostered in your parish and diocese?
2. How does the leadership in your community regularly concern itself with cultivating a spirit of simplicity and humility?
3. What evidence would new members have that your community is concerned for those most in need and those who are alienated? Where would they find this evidence? How would they be invited to join this outreach?
4. How and when does your community engage in ecumenical dialogue and activities with neighboring Christian churches?

Missionary Initiative

- Catechesis equips the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives.
- It also prepares them to lend their cooperation to the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation.
- Task of evangelization originates, for the lay faithful, in the sacraments of Christian initiation and in the secular character of their vocation.
- The evangelical attitudes which Jesus taught his disciples when he sent them on mission are precisely those which catechesis must nourish:
 - To seek out the lost sheep
 - Proclaim and heal at the same time
 - To be poor, without money or knapsack
 - To know how to accept rejection and persecution
 - To place one's trust in the Father and in support of the Holy Spirit
 - To expect no other reward than the joy of working for the Kingdom
- Catechesis is also necessary for interreligious dialogue and rendering the faithful capable of meaningful communication with men and women of other religions
- Catechesis shows that the link between the Church and non-Christian religions is the common origin and end of the human race
- Catechesis prepares the faithful to enter into dialogue with adherents of other religions without compromising the need to proclaim the Gospel
- The true mark of a maturing spirituality is mission.
- We are baptized into mission
- Our spirituality needs to permeate all that we do – in our place in the family, the work world, and society.
- Our spirituality mandates and impels us to tell others about Jesus, inviting them into positions of service in the church as well

Questions for Reflection

1. How are the members of your community encouraged to see their faith from a missionary perspective?
2. What efforts are made to invite and encourage inactive Catholics back to the Church?
3. How does our community provide a public witness to the transforming power of the Gospel?
4. In what ways does your community engage in dialogue and partnership with other organized efforts to improve the quality of life in your neighborhood and in the world?
5. In what ways does your community participate in formal interreligious dialogue?