

THE CATECHIST AND THE LEARNER

LESSON PLAN

I. Opening Prayer (5minutes)

- a. Read Luke 1:26-38

II. The Ministry of Catechesis (20 minutes)

- a. Assign sections from Catechism of the Catholic Church and Catechesi Tradendae (handouts H-1 & H-2) – read and respond. “What is Catechesis according to this section?”
- b. Share responses to statements with the group
- c. Facilitator summarizes and highlights key insights

III. The Vocation of the Catechist (20 minutes)

- a. Present Characteristics of Call
- b. Small Group Scripture Survey using Luke 1:26-38
- c. Personal Sharing on the call to serve as a Catechist

IV. The Role of the Catechist (20 minutes)

- a. Assign sections from the General Directory for Catechesis handout (H-3) and list roles of the catechist indicated in the assigned section.
- b. Share Responses with large group – each group briefly presents their list of roles found in the text.
- c. Facilitator summarizes and highlights key insights.

V. The Learner (25 minutes)

- a. Present Ways of Understanding Experience handout (H-4)
- b. Assign the Personal Learning and Teaching Style Preference handout (H-5) and briefly discuss.
- c. Facilitator summarizes and highlights key insights.

VI. Faith Development (25 minutes)

- a. Ask participant to reflect on their faith life and identify key moments of growth
- b. Present Stages of Faith Development handout (H-6)
- c. Reactions, summary and closing prayer

THE CATECHIST AND THE LEARNER

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND HANDOUTS

I. Opening Prayer

Read Luke 1:26-38

II. The Ministry of Catechesis

A. The purpose of this section is to explore catechetical ministry in the Catholic Church.

B. Break into two groups and distribute handout H-1, "*Catechism of the Catholic Church*", and handout H-2, "*Catechesi Tradendae*", and then assign sections to each small group.

Survey

Invite participants to read the assigned section from the Catechism or Catechesi Tradendae as a group and answer the question, "What is catechesis according to this section?" Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker to write their answer to the statement. Invite them to hang the newsprint about the room. "Catechesis is . . ."

Sharing

Encourage the participants to walk around the room reading answers and choose one that best fits their image of Catechesis. Stand by the newsprint you think/feel is most important. Once the participants have chosen...invite them to share with those clustered around the newsprint why they chose it. Reflections can also be shared with the large group if time permits.

Summary

Facilitator summarizes and highlights main ideas from above sharing.

III. The Vocation of the Catechist

A. The purpose of this section is to explore the experience of being called as revealed in Scripture and the specific call to be a catechist.

B. Present the following information to the participants.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states, "The call to the ministry of catechist is a vocation, an interior call, the voice of the Holy Spirit." (NDC 8.8)

"The word vocation comes from the Latin word Vocare, which means, "to call." A vocation is more than a job. It is a call from God to serve in a certain way. God takes the lead. God calls. We answer by saying "yes" or "no." God gives us a choice to cooperate or not with the divine plan. God never forces. The call is God's, the response is ours. If we refuse to work with God, the plan will evolve in some other way. We all have the same basic call: to live as children of God, saved by Christ, sharing in his life and sharing that life with others. That is our common call.

A call to catechetical ministry is recognized as being a vocational response and an opportunity for holiness. God called you to this role. We read about the call of many people in the Bible: Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Mary. We know of holy people from Church history: St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope John Paul II, and Mother Teresa to name a few. God does not speak to most people from a burning bush, in a cloud or through an angel. He gives us opportunities and challenges. He gives us internal nudges that draw us to try something new, to give of ourselves more, to serve

others when it is not always convenient. God speaks to us in prayer, through the Bible, through the Church and through people who are close to God.

Characteristics of Call

1. Breaks into our Ordinary Routine
2. A Force of Attraction and Resistance
3. God's Promise to be Faithful

Survey

Break into small groups and invite the participants to read Luke 1:26-38

Sharing

Ask participants to share with their small group how each was called to be a catechist. Invite them to notice any similarities and differences between their calls and the call in the Scripture reading.

Summary

Facilitator highlights main ideas from the above sharing.

IV. The Role of the Catechist

A. The purpose of this section is to explore the different roles of the catechist.

B. Survey

Break into small groups and distribute handout H-3, "*General Directory for Catechesis*", and assign two or three excerpts to each small group. Invite participants to read the assigned section from the GDC and to list the roles of the catechist indicated in the reading.

Sharing

Ask each group to choose a spokesperson to share their list. Facilitator will say, "The role of a catechist is..." Point to a group, and the spokesperson will finish with their list. Do this quickly without discussion. After all groups have had a chance to share their lists, see how many the group can recall without referring to their list. Write answers on newsprint if you wish.

Summary

Facilitator summarizes and highlights main ideas of above sharing.

V. The Learner

A. The purpose of this section is to understand how people learn.

B. In the large group give each participant a plain sheet of paper and two markers and instruct them as follows:

Divide your sheet of paper in half. On one half, draw a picture of you teaching in your classroom; and on the other half, draw a picture of the student you find hardest to teach.

Trade pictures with your neighbor and just notice each other's pictures for a few moments. No comments. Return to original artist.

Ask the participants the following questions, voting by raising their hands.

- How many liked this exercise? Why?

- How many disliked this exercise? Why?
- How many of you are rather neutral about this exercise? Why?

We each have our own preferred way of learning, and it shows in an exercise such as this one. Imagine what it would be like if I told you the balance of this class would be nothing but a whole series of drawing. Some of you would be thrilled, some depressed, and some would suddenly have to leave.

Children also have their own preferred way of learning. Learning styles affect where a person prefers to sit, the noise level needed to facilitate learning, the amount of movement a person needs in order to internalize new information and what types of instructional activities are most effective in order for the new information to be retained.

C. Present Ways of Understanding Experiences distribute handout H-4

Good catechesis makes use of our senses, especially our ability to learn by hearing, seeing, and moving. Many teaching strategies make use of more than one of these senses. For example, people who participate in a role-play will use all three of these senses: hearing what is said, moving around to make the role-play more realistic, and watching the other persons' expressions and responding to what is seen there.

1. Visual learners learn best by seeing through words or pictures.
2. Auditory learners learn best by hearing.
3. Kinesthetic or Tactile learners learn best by moving around.
 - a. Kinesthetic refers to large body movements such as dancing or miming.
 - b. Tactile refers to a sense of touch.

Cultural Impact

There is little doubt that culture also affects people's learning styles. Contemporary American culture, especially as experienced by the young, is visual and pragmatic. It stresses instant gratification and entertainment, encouraging a brief attention span and quick changes of focus. Some writers speak of the "screen generation" of youth who have spent much more time before a television or computer screen than in school. These cultural factors definitely affect the learning style of today's youth, just as a different culture conditioned how we learn.

When planning a class all of these approaches can be helpful. They mutually enrich each other.

Survey

Have participant's complete "*Personal Learning and Teaching Style Preference*" handout H-5. Allow time for each participant to assess his or her learning and teaching preferences and to discover areas in which growth is needed.

Sharing

Invite the participants to share their teaching styles with the group and its effectiveness in the classroom.

Summary

Facilitator invites participants to assess their teaching strategies with the specific style of the learner.

VI. Faith Development

A. The purpose of this section is to recognize the different stages of faith in the student and the catechist.

B. Present the following.

Faith is both a gift of God and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his or her response and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed. It is this revelation of God which the Church proposes for our belief, and which we profess in the Creed, celebrate in the sacraments, live by right conduct that fulfills the twofold commandment of charity (as specified in the Ten Commandments) and responds to our prayer of faith. Faith is both a theological virtue given by God as grace, and an obligation, which flows from the first commandment of God. (CCC 26, 142, 150, 1814, 2087)

C. Distribute handout H-6 on *Faith Development*

Survey

Ask each participant to reflect on the timeline of his or her life, identifying along the timeline, key moments of growth in faith.

Sharing

What we see is that faith is a process, not a thing, and it takes place in stages. Faith, our relationship and response to God, develops throughout our lifetime. The following ages are approximates. It must also be noted that not all people go through all of the stages of faith development. Present the following:

1. *Faith from Parents–Birth to Age 6*
A child takes on what parents or significant adults believe and projects this as his or her own. The child accepts parental faith without much question.
2. *Faith from Stories–Ages 6-12*
A child can follow a story line and begin to make personal the faith attitudes of adults. For example, a child between the ages of 6 and 12 can say, “I believe that the bread at Mass really becomes Jesus.”
3. *Faith from the Group–Ages 12 Late Adolescence*
A youth in this age group becomes capable of abstract thought and can handle doctrinal formulas. This is the stage of conformity to a group’s ideas and social norms. It is also a time of uncritical faith.
4. *Making Faith One’s Own–Late Adolescence to Adult*
The individual becomes a critical thinker with questions that need to be addressed. Differences, values, and alternatives are examined, and choices are made. This is an either/or stage that does not recognize a middle ground.
5. *Mature, Open Faith–Adult*
As a person matures, he or she becomes more comfortable with mystery and paradox. The individual does not need to resolve polarities by eliminating one side.
6. *Deep, Consistent Faith–Late Adult*
This is a stage of great holiness. The individual has resolved paradoxes and is in constant contact with God. All actions and attitudes originate from this contact.

Invite the group to reflect on where they are in their faith development. What signs of indications do they see in themselves that cause them to assign themselves to a particular stage? (These are personal reflections and need not be commented on during this workshop.)

D. Reactions, Summary, and Closing Prayer

If time permits invite participants to offer feedback. If there is no time summarize by making the following statement.

Catechist must take into account both Learning Styles and Faith Development in their role as a Catechist. “The Tools of the Catechist” (the next prerequisite class), and most especially your Teacher’s Manual and Textbook, will be of enormous value to you in lesson planning. Your grade level manual takes into account what we have discussed today.

Remember, you are limited by your imagination—always take into account the various needs of all the students in your classes. Look again at that child you find most difficult to teach. What can you change or add to your lesson plans to reach him or her.

Distribute the Catechist Learning Assessment form and encourage catechists to complete the form as soon as possible and return to their catechetical leader.

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- A. Quite early on, the name *catechesis* was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life thus building up the body of Christ. (CCC 4, CT 1, 2)
- B. "Catechesis is an *education in the faith* of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life." (CCC 5, CT 18)
- C. While not being formally identified with them, catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission, which have a catechetical aspect that prepare for catechesis, or spring from it. They are the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching to arouse faith; examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments; integration into the ecclesial community; and apostolic and missionary witness. (CCC 6, CT 18)
- D. "Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis." (CCC 7, CT 13)
- E. "At the heart of catechesis, we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever." (CT 5) To catechize is "to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him. (CT 5) Catechesis aims at putting "people...in communion...with Jesus Christ; only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity." (CCC 426, CT 5)
- F. In catechesis, "Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God,...is taught—everything else is taught with reference to him—and it is Christ alone who teaches—anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips...Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me' ". (CCC 427, CT 6, cf., Jn 7:16)

CATECHESI TRADENDAE

- A. The ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh from the Councils. (*CT 13*)
- B. To begin with, it is clear that the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right...every human being has the right to seek religious truth and adhere to it freely... That is why catechetical activity should be able to be carried out in favorable circumstances of time and place, and should have access to the mass media and suitable equipment, without discrimination against parents, those receiving catechesis or those importing it. (*CT 14*)
- C. The specific character of catechesis...has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ... This means that “Catechesis” must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith, but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith. (*CT 19*)
- D. Nevertheless, the specific aim of catechesis is to develop, with God’s help, an as-yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old. 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. (*CT 20*)
- E. ...Characteristics of this instruction (catechesis):
- ✓ it must be systematic, not improvised, but programmed to reach a precise goal
 - ✓ it must deal with essentials, without any claim to tackle all disputed questions or to transform itself into theological research or scientific exegesis
 - ✓ it must nevertheless be sufficiently complete, not stopping short at the initial proclamation of the Christian mystery such as we have in the kerygma
 - ✓ it must be an integral Christian initiation, open to all the other factors of Christian life. (*CT 21*)
- F. Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity...Catechesis always has reference to the sacraments. (*CT 23*)
- G. We can say of catechesis...that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures...catechesis “takes flesh” in the various cultures and milieu. (*CT 53*)
- H. It is true that catechesis can be given anywhere, but...the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis...every parish...has the serious duty to train people completely dedicated to providing catechetical leadership...to provide the equipment needed for catechesis under all aspects, to increase and adapt the place for catechesis to the extent that it is possible and useful to do so; and to be watchful about the quality of the religious formation of the various groups and their integration into the ecclesial community. (*CT 67*)
- I. ...Family catechesis, therefore, precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis... Thus there cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for the ministry of being their own children’s catechists and to carry it out with tireless zeal. (*CT 68*)

THE GENERAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

- 152 The catechist must teach the person to read his own lived experience...so as to accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to conversion, commitment, to hope, and to discover more and more in his life God's plan for him.
- 153 Interpreting and illuminating experience with the data of faith as a constant task of catechetical pedagogy.
- 156 The catechist is essentially a mediator. S/he facilitates communication between the people and the mystery of God, between subjects amongst themselves, as well as with the community.
- 157 Believers...are called to respond to the gift of God through prayer, participation in the sacraments, the liturgy, ecclesial and social commitment, works of charity, and promotion of human values...
- 158 Besides public and collective proclamation of the Gospel, person-to-person contact, after the example of Jesus and the Apostles, remains indispensable.
- 220 Catechesis is a responsibility of the entire Christian community.
- 240 Besides being a witness, the catechist must also be a teacher who teaches faith...formation should afford the catechist an organic awareness of the Christian message, structured around the central mystery of faith, Jesus Christ.
- 244 ...The catechist is an educator who facilitates maturation of the faith...
- 234 ...The adequate *formation of catechists* cannot be overlooked...Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists.
- 235 ...The purpose of formation, therefore, is nothing other than to lead the catechist to know how to animate a catechetical journey...
- 238 Formation, above all else, must help him to mature as a person, a believer, and an apostle. It requires the catechist to have a sufficient knowledge of the message he transmits and of those to whom he transmits the message and of the social context in which they live.
- 239 ...The formation, above all, nourishes the *spirituality* of the catechist, so that his activity springs in truth from his own witness of life... Formation also constantly nourishes the *apostolic consciousness of the catechist*, that is, his sense of being an evangelizer.

WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES



VISUAL: The visual learner will learn best by seeing it. Using the chalkboard to draw out a concept...bulletin boards...films...

◆◆◆ If you ask them, a question that they need to think about, they may look up in the air to either the right or left of you. Most often, they will see the answer...some sort of visual image will pop into their mind.

???Questions That Help Them Focus???

Does this seem clear? How do you see it? Do you have the picture?

Have you seen this before? Do you see what I mean? Or...I see what you are saying.



AUDITORY: The auditory learner will learn best by hearing. Therefore, an oral presentation is good for them...sitting down and talking or discussing a topic...listening to music...hearing the directions read aloud as they read along make them clearer.

◆◆◆ If you ask them a question that they have to think about, they may look to the right or left of you before they respond. Most often they will hear the answer...

???Questions That Help Them Focus???

How does that sound? Do you hear what I mean? Or...I hear you...you can say that again...I hear what you are saying.



KINESTHETIC: The kinesthetic learner will learn best by experiencing it...Therefore activity is a good way for them to learn. Drawing or creative expression in writing...anything that will get them into the felt sense of things. If you talk about how you felt in an experience, they will identify with you.

◆◆◆ If you ask them a question that they have to think about they may look down on the floor...either right or left for the answer. Most often, they will connect a feeling with the answer.

???Questions That Help Them Focus???

How does that feel? How do you feel about _____? Do you have a sense of it? How did the film move you?

PERSONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING STYLE PREFERENCE

My Preferred Learning Style

Each person has a preferred style of learning and teaching. It is important to recognize one's own preferences and then to learn to complement them with other styles of learning and teaching. In this way, catechists can respect their own preferences while adapting their styles to the diverse preferences of students. Sometimes a person's learning preference may differ from his or her preferred teaching style.

Directions: Check those activities that best help you learn:

- 1. Drawing
- 2. A Lecture
- 3. Videos
- 4. Role Playing
- 5. Poems
- 6. Graphs, Tables,
- 7. Arts and Crafts
- 8. Stories
- 9. TV Programs
- 10. Physical Motion
- 11. Musical Pieces
- 12. Art
- 13. Painting
- 14. Songs
- 15. Photographs
- 16. Dance
- 17. Audio Cassettes
- 18. Video Cassettes
- 19. Gesture
- 20. Sound Effects
- 21. Slides

Count the numbers you have checked on each line.

	NUMBER	LEARNING STYLE
<u>3 6 9 12 15 18 21</u>	_____	_____
<u>2 5 8 11 14 17 20</u>	_____	_____
<u>1 4 7 10 13 16 19</u>	_____	_____

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

1. <i>Faith from Parents–Birth to Age 6</i>	MY TIMELINE	
2. <i>Faith from Stories–Ages 6-12</i>		
3. <i>Faith from the Group–Ages 12-Late Adolescence</i>		
4. <i>Making Faith One’s Own–Late Adolescence to Adult</i>		
5. <i>Mature, Open Faith–Adult</i>		
6. <i>Deep, Consistent Faith–Late Adult</i>		