The Office of Catechesis supports the mission of the Diocese of Boise by assisting the Bishop in carrying out his role as the chief catechist of the diocese.

Catechist Certification

Classroom Skills

Kathy Barkdull, Presenter
Let us put ourselves in the presence of God as we pray, Lord God, you are the source of all love, truth and goodness. You are the source of my being and your Word is the true path for my journey. Grant to us the courage to live according to your Word. Instill in us, through the gift of your Holy Spirit, the desire and the wisdom to share your love, your truth, your goodness with our students. Help us to use our time to better prepare myself for this sacred responsibility. For we so need to offer ourselves in your service with all of the patience, perseverance, and love that you have first shown to us. We ask no more than this, Lord, in the name of your Son and my Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.
Introductions

Which skills would you consider to be most important for a Catechist?
Questions/Comments??

Use the “Chat” box option in your tool pane one the right side of your screen.
Ongoing Formation of Catechists

“Since effective catechesis depends on virtuous and skilled catechists, their ongoing formation should enhance the human, spiritual, and apostolic qualities and catechetical skills they bring to their ministry. The pastoral care of catechists is an essential aspect of the diocese’s overall catechetical plan.”

NDC 55.E
“Thorough planning and preparation create a framework for the catechist to move forward in the most effective manner, while avoiding or preempting a large variety of discipline problems. An effective catechist is one who examines the blueprint for the lesson, imagines every possible scenario, and prepares for it.”

Catechist Toolbox
Planning and Preparation in Catechesis

Planning and preparation make up 70 percent of the total act of teaching a lesson.
Skills for Planning & Preparation

- Long-Range Planning
- Become familiar with the Catechist Manual and your Students Text
- Envisioning the lesson you will be teaching
- Make any necessary adjustments
- Know the expected learning outcomes or goals for each lesson
- Prepare your materials for the lesson
- Prepare for more than you think you’ll need
- Have a Plan B just in case
- Pray for guidance and wisdom
Catechetical Process

1. *Engage* the life experiences of your students or participants.
2. *Explore* the concepts to be taught.
3. *Reflect* and integrate the concepts with the lived experience.
Strategy for Lesson Planning

- Long Range Planning – Goals for the entire Catechetical year
- Unit Planning – Calendar of scheduled classes
- Seasonal Planning – Liturgical seasons
- Short Range Planning – Series of lessons
- Immediate Planning – Particular lesson
- Evaluation after each lesson
Sample Lesson Planning Worksheet

Date: __________________________
Topic/Theme: _____________________________________
Aim/Objective: ____________________________________
Materials Needed: _________________________________
Opening Prayer:

Introduce the Lesson (Time:______)
Reference to last Class:
Textbook pages:
New terms/concepts:

Teach the Lesson (Time:______)
Methods:
Questions:
Activities:
Audio-Visuals:

Conclude the Lesson (Time:______)
Emphasize the main idea:
Homework/Assignments:
Closing Prayer:
Materials & Resources

- Catechist Manual & Participant Textbook
- Audio/visual – music, movies, power points, etc.
- Resources for seasonal activities, the saints, etc.
- Catechism, Lectionary/Bible
- General &/or National Directory for Catechesis
- Books on Prayer and Spirituality
- Supplies for crafts and activities
- Articles for a Prayer Center/Corner
- Diocesan Resource Center
“Catechist and teacher manuals are essential components of any sound catechetical textbook series. Fundamentally, they should communicate to catechists and teachers what they themselves are expected to communicate to the students.”

NDC 68.A
Catechetical Textbooks Should:

- Present the authentic message of Christ and his Church.
- Be faithful to the Sacred Scripture.
- Highlight essential truths of the faith.
- Be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- Be approved by the local bishop.
- Provide a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ to the user.
- Promote a true conversion to Jesus Christ.
- Inspire and encourage the user to live the Christian life more faithfully.
- Be culturally appropriate & reflect real-life situation of the user.
- Promote charity, appreciation and respect for all people.
- Present other ecclesial communities and religions accurately.
- Include examples of Christian prayer and Sacred Scripture.
- Be visually attractive that engages the students with a variety of Christian art.
Using Catechist Manuals & Textbooks

- Familiarize yourself with the text.
- Make sure it is appropriate for the age level & aptitude of your students.
- Preview the material you plan to cover.
- Give an overview of the ‘what’ the students are expected to read.
- Vary the approach to reading the text.
- Identify key phrases and vocabulary words.
- Use the text as a springboard for your own discussion questions and activities.
- Check out the Catechist Notes in the margins.
Lessons with the Focus on the Learners

- Don’t do all the talking.
- Learners retain 90% of what they DO, not what they HEAR.
- Prepare Open-Ended Questions.
- Remember you are not there to perform but make sure your participants do.
Tips for asking Questions

- Ask simple, straightforward questions.
- Keep questions open-ended.
- Avoid answering your own questions.
- Ask the question and then repeat it.
- In waiting for an answer, move around the room and/or make eye contact.
- Ask a question to the whole group first and then to one individual if necessary.
- Plan your questions ahead of time.
- Give feedback when a question is answered.
- Ask discussion leading questions.
Classroom Environment Checklist

- Chairs, desks, tables that are age-appropriate and can be moved for activities and discussion.
- Is the room too hot or too cold? Is there proper ventilation? Is it clean?
- Is there a whiteboard or easel pad to write on? Are markers, erasers, etc. available?
- Is the space accessible and suitable for everyone?
- Can you display artwork? Is there storage for materials? Is there a place for a permanent prayer center?
- Do you have a Bible, crucifix, candle, seasonal liturgical colors, etc.?
- Does the room have projection equipment, extension cords, CD player, etc.
Because catechesis seeks to lead persons and communities to deeper faith, it is oriented to prayer and worship. …Catechesis for prayer accompanies a person’s continual growth in faith. It is most effective when the catechist is a prayerful person who is comfortable leading others to prayer and to participation in liturgical worship. When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit.

NDC 34
“Your participants need prayer because without a personal, affective relationship with God in their lives, all the doctrine in the world can seem meaningless.”

Catechist Toolbox
Prepare a Prayer Center

- A sacred space that can be a permanent part of the classroom or set up each week in a shared space.
- A Bible, Crucifix, Statue, Icon, liturgical colored cloths, Advent, Lent or Holy Week symbols.
- Invite a student to “enthrone” the Bible each week.
Traditional Prayers

- Memorize or “take to heart” traditional prayers.
- Make sure the students understand the words in the prayers they are “taking to heart”.
- Invite the parents, sponsors or parishioners to assist in teaching the prayers. To be Prayer Partners.
Lectio Divina

- **Lectio** – *reading* slowly and prayerfully a brief scripture passage up to 3 times with a silent pause between each reading. Invite participants to share the word or phrase that is speaking to them.

- **Meditatio** – the listeners silently *meditate* upon the word or phrase.

- **Oratio** – participants enter into silent dialogue/prayer with God for a few minutes.

- **Contemplatio** – participants *contemplate* or rest silently and prayerfully in God’s presence allowing the word of God to speak to their hearts in silence.
Reflective Prayer

- Establish a quiet, prayerful and comfortable environment.
- Invite participants to focus on God’s presence.
- Encourage a comfortable posture.
- Invite deep breathing.
- Use reflective music.
- Invitation to reflect on an aspect of the lesson theme, a scripture passage or traditional prayer.
  - Speak slowly with pauses
  - Engage the imagination and senses
  - Time for silent prayer
  - Gentle transition to the next activity
Liturgical Prayer

• A Liturgical experience is the work of all who are gathered.
• Assign roles ahead of time.
• Consider the following elements:
  o Song
  o Silence
  o The Sign of the Cross
  o A greeting or invitation to prayer
  o Scripture
  o Ritual gestures
  o Responses and Shared prayer
  o The Liturgical Calendar
  o Length and pace of the prayer
Spontaneous Prayer

- Encourage participants to be comfortable with Spontaneous Prayer by:
  - Demonstrate ways of addressing God
  - Offering thanks
  - Asking for forgiveness
  - Praying for the needs of the group
  - Praying for the needs of others
  - A conclusion
Avoid the temptation that you have no time to pray because you have so much content to teach.

Prayer is a part of the content of our faith as well. Remember, it is one of the four “pillars” of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, along with the creed, the sacraments, and the commandments. We are never too busy to grab a bite to eat, even if it’s fast food. To skip prayer is to skip the all-important reminder that all that we do is in acknowledgment of God.

Catechist Toolbox
Tips when Things go Wrong
The Audio-Visual equipment doesn’t work or isn’t in the room!

• Arrive early to make sure equipment you need is present.
• Go through a trial run to make sure the video, DVD or CD player plays, the volume works, picture comes on, etc.
• Know who to call if there is a problem.
• Have a back up plan in case of fatal equipment malfunction, power outage or other catastrophe.
You are short of the number of handouts or materials needed!

• Keep materials & supplies organized in a basket, tote or bag.
• Always plan for those who sign up late for a class with a few extra.
• Ask the participants to share handouts, books, supplies in the short term.
Someone asks a question you can’t answer!

• If the question is reasonable, say “that’s a good question, I don’t have the answer now but will find out before the next lesson”. Then make sure you have the answer at the next lesson.
• If you are working with adults, you could invite someone else to answer the question.
• Deflect difficult questions back by asking “What do you think?”
• Have the class look up the answer as homework & share their answers and resources with the class.
• Above all, DON’T PANIC!
• By telling your students you need to research and learn the answer, you model for them what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
A Guest Speaker/Presenter doesn’t show up!

- STUFF HAPPENS! ALWAYS HAVE A

Plan A

Plan B
You can’t find the energy to teach the class!

At the last minute you develop a sore throat, your child gets sick, or had a disagreement with someone that leaves you emotionally drained – Now What?

- Have a contingency plan in place for a substitute who can teach the class for you.
- Know when you have hit the proverbial wall and ask for help.
- If all options fail and you’re not contagious, pray for God’s strength to get you through.
Classroom Discipline
“Young people today...will be very likely to reject some of what they learn, or to refuse to integrate it in their lives, if it is not taught in ways that make sense to them emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.”

NDC 4.C
“Discipline is a necessary part of faith formation. Each Lent, we practice the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and giving alms. The idea is that, in order to be a disciple of Jesus, one needs discipline. Remember, our God is “not the God of disorder but of peace” (1 Cor 14:33). When you maintain discipline in your learning environment, you are acting in the image of God – in whose name you teach.”

Catechist Toolbox
Even Jesus faced some difficult situations.

- Matt. 13:57 (Jesus is rejected in his hometown.)
- Mark 11:28 (The crowds challenge Jesus’ authority.)
- Luke 4:29 (Jesus is thrown out of the synagogue and dragged to a cliff.)
- Luke 9:52-53 (The crowds grumble when Jesus announces he will dine with Zacchaeus.)
- John 6:66 (Many of Jesus’ followers find his teaching too difficult and leave him.)
- John 8:59 (Crowds pick up stones to throw at Jesus.)
- John 9:14 (The crowds challenge Jesus’ healing of a man born blind.)
- John 10:31 (More stones!)
Understanding the role of Good Discipline

- Good discipline is not an end in itself.
- The goal of any teaching session is effective learning.
- The role of good discipline is to remove any obstacles from an effective learning experience.
Identifying Improper Behavior

- Boredom.
- Immaturity and ego needs.
- Hostility toward the Catechist, other participants, the Church or parents.
- Personality clash with the Catechist or other participants.
- Emotional problems.
- Young people who don’t want their peers to think they “enjoy” learning about religion.
Avoiding Discipline Problems when Working with Small Groups

- Provide clear instructions and direction.
- Creative and fun techniques for grouping the participants.
- Brief and concise time limits for completing a task.
- Group work that has to be completed by the entire group.
- Provide updates as to how much time they have left.
- Use a signal indicating when it’s time to return attention to the large group.
- Make sure group outcomes are observable and concrete.
Coping with Discipline Problems

- Remain calm.
- Avoid interrupting your lesson if possible.
- Keep participants involved and engaged.
  
  “Be ever engaged, so that whenever the devil calls he may find you occupied.” St. Jerome
- Move around, keep your eyes moving and use participants names.
- Alter the seating arrangement if possible.
- Reinforce good behavior.
- Create rules, explain them & enforce them consistently.
- Know the developmental needs of the age group you are working with.
Discipline taboos

- Sending a child out of the room unsupervised.
- Using God as an “enforcer”. No images of an angry God who is waiting to dish out punishment.
- Being overly tough.

  Don’t become this kind of Catechist!
No Talking
No Laughing
No Smiling

In fact: No Nothing that induces any kind of pleasure
Catechist Tips

- Be organized, hopeful, wide awake
- Leave your own problems at home
- Expect the best
- Plan more activities than you need
- Plan a variety of activities
- Remove distractions from the room
- Give directions slowly and clearly
- Move around the area
- Make eye contact
- Vary your voice and pace
- Be aware of your facial expressions & body language
✔ Be aware of what is going on in the entire room
✔ Be creative but with a sense of order & regularity
✔ Keep a sense of humor
✔ Apologize when at fault
✔ Don’t threaten, embarrass or humiliate
✔ Be sensitive to your students
✔ Be confident
✔ Be aware of students’ physical, psychological, emotional, social, as well as spiritual needs
✔ Above all……
If "Plan A" didn't work.
The alphabet has 25 more letters!
Stay cool.
• Which Catechist skill do you consider to be your strength?

• Which skill do you want to enhance or perfect?
Interconnectedness with the Global Church

- Implementation of Catechetical Documents
  - General Directory for Catechesis – 1971
  - National Directory for Catechesis – 1979 Revised in 2003
  - The Catechetical Documents – 1996
  - Revised Catholic Catechism – 1995
  - United States Catechism for Adults – 2006
Catechetical Focus Resources

- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – 1988
- Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States - 1999
Catechist Formation

- **Echoes of Faith**
  - Catechetical Skills
  - Theology
  - Methodology

- **Publisher Resources**
  - The Catechist Toolbox – Loyola Press
    - [www.catechist.com](http://www.catechist.com) - online companion to Catechist Magazine
    - [www.faithfirst.com/teachers.html](http://www.faithfirst.com/teachers.html)

- **Other Opportunities**
  - Courses offered by & throughout the diocese
    - Servant School
    - Webinars
    - University of Dayton (VLCFF)
    - Retreats, Workshops, Conferences
Bottom row l-r: Sr. Chela Gonzalez, Director of the Office of Catechesis; Cathy Wheaton, Administrative Assistant & Resource Center Coordinator

Top row l-r: Santiago Robles, Coordinator of Adult & Family Catechesis; Jackie Hopper, Coordinator of Children’s Catechesis; Chris Kreslins, Coordinator of Youth & Young Adult Catechesis

We’re here to serve – and only a phone call or email away!
Basic Catechist Certification

4th Session Webinar
Age Development & Special Needs
In the Classroom

Thursday, November 13, 2014
7:00 pm MST, 6:00 pm PST
Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined. Matthew 7:24-27

Lord Jesus, rabbi and teacher, help us to build our lessons upon the solid rock foundation of good planning preparation. And when the wind comes and the rains buffet, may our teaching withstand the challenges so that those we teach may come to know that your Word will endure all things, for you are Lord forever and ever.

Amen