

Implementation of the Guidelines for Catechesis

Guidelines in General:

Guidelines for Catechesis set benchmarks for a person's more structured experience of the faith. These Guidelines are set up by developmental stages, not specific grade levels. This format allows the Guidelines to be applied more easily to lectionary based catechesis, intergenerational/family based catechesis as well as the traditional text and/or theme model of catechesis.

Structure of these Guidelines:

Catechesis is a life long process; an individual continually grows in his/her living, understanding and integrating of the faith. These Guidelines embrace the four components of Catechesis:

- Word/Message: Revelation, Scripture, Creedal Concepts
- Worship/Liturgy: Sacraments, Prayer and Worship, the Liturgical Year
- Community: Church, Faith and Identity, Personal Growth, Relationships
- Discipleship: Christian Lifestyles, Morality, Justice and Peace

These Guidelines for Catechesis of the Diocese of Raleigh apply these components to adults, youth, and children. In light of the General Directory for Catechesis, special emphasis is to be placed on the development of social and personal morality integrated into daily living and the development and nurturing of a life of prayer and spirituality.

Centrality of Adult Catechesis:

Since Vatican Council II, the documents published by the Catholic Church have emphasized the centrality of adult catechesis. To a large extent, this emphasis has not yet reached its potential.

Pope John Paul II writes in *Catechesi Tradendae*, "Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis." #43 The new General Directory for Catechesis, published in 1997, reiterates this message: "Adult catechesis...is the axis around which revolves the catechesis of childhood and adolescence as well as old age," #275 as does the second draft of "Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan on Adult Faith Formation in the United States."

In this light, the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh commits its creative energy, and its resources to promoting the faith formation of adults, particularly through forming catechists and catechetical leaders, as its priority. At the same time, we pledge our efforts to continue effective ministry to children and youth. In reality, it is the adult community - parents, members of the parish community, catechists – that passes on the faith tradition of our church community to its younger members.

Methodology/Pedagogy:

People learn according to their developmental readiness. Research in the area of faith development, cognitive development, psycho-social development, and moral development support catechesis by helping catechists to catechize effectively. The General Directory for Catechesis highlights the importance of applying these theories to catechesis. It is equally important for the catechist to be

formed in content: scripture, liturgy, creed, spirituality, etc. Effective session planning incorporates, applies and integrates these components. Catechesis also takes place within a specific cultural context of both the individual and the community. Being aware of and responsive to this context increases the effectiveness of evangelizing and catechizing.

- ✓ See addendum on learning theories, cultural awareness.
- ✓ See The Catechetical Institute

Role of the Community and Family Households in Catechesis

The General Directory for Catechesis makes clear that the entire faith community shares the privilege and the responsibility for catechesis. In this community, two groups of people - catechists and parents - hold a special responsibility. The rite of baptism states clearly that the parents are the first and best teachers and models of the faith. Parents need to nurture their role and understand that the faith development of their children begins at baptism and continues on a daily basis in their home until more formal formation begins in pre-school.

When formal catechesis begins, catechists, in some cases the parents themselves through home catechesis, partner with the parish/school to add formal structure to what has taken place already in the home, the 'domestic church.' Every effort needs to be made to include parents in all stages and steps of catechesis beginning with planning. Preferably the catechetical resources used actively engage the parents and family in catechesis. To assist partnership with parents, these Guidelines for Catechesis include:

- Vocabulary words with definitions geared to a child's level of understanding
- Gestures and symbols with definitions, again geared to the child's level of understanding
- The words and prayers that parents teach their children. Some of the wording may vary, depending on translations used in the parish.
- A bibliography of resources that can support parents in nurturing the faith of their children
- A list of suggestions on how parish/school activities can partner with families