

## Catechetical Models

(excerpted from Diocesan Catechetical Manual, Section II. Policy, pages 14-15)

Catechetical models refer to the way by which the content, time, space and audience is structured for catechesis. Regardless of the catechetical model that is chosen, in order for the program to be complete, it must be inspired by the applicable catechumenal elements while keeping in mind the baptismal graces to be developed. Below is a brief description of possible catechetical models.

### Classroom Model Catechesis

In the Diocese of Fargo, most parishes use a classroom model for catechesis, easily likened to what occurs in our Catholic and public school systems – one catechist, with a helper catechizing a class consisting of one grade or in smaller parishes two or three grades using a textbook and creative tools for explaining and applying the Faith. This model does allow for a systematic presentation of the Faith, most textbooks assume this model, and is most familiar.

A variation of the classroom model is to conduct sessions based on topics that are presented during one session or a series of sessions, e.g. the Gospel of John, Living the Faith at Work, How to Pray, etc, or sessions might be based on the questions asked by the particular group or age level. This classroom variation is most effective with high school and adult students.

### Discussion Groups

This model requires students to read a text and reflect upon the text prior to the session. The session consists of discussing the text in light of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium. This model differs from the classroom model: 1) the catechist serves as a facilitator directing the groups' questions and discussion in such a manner as to lead them to understand the doctrines of the Faith rather than lecturing; and 2) the group sits in a way that enables discussion, e.g. a circle of chairs, around a table, a living room, etc.

### Family or Intergenerational Catechesis

In this model catechetical sessions are presented to all age levels – elderly, adults, teens, children. Typically, there is a presentation by a catechist and then the intergenerational group using various tools for explanation and application studies the lesson. A variation of this model is to have several (three to five) families gather in one of their homes on a regular basis for catechetical sessions. Usually one of the parents is the catechist for these family groups.

### Youth Group Catechesis

The term "youth group" is defined here as a catechetical model that includes catechizing on doctrine, liturgical life (sacraments), morals, prayer, outreach and social activity by a group of adults who are available to them not only during youth group time but also in the other areas of their life. Parishes utilizing this model should create groups for both junior and senior high.

## All Girls/All Boys

Research strongly supports the advantage of having all girls or all boys together. Why? In short, boys and girls, men and women are different not only physically, but spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Any of the previous models could be implemented with this variation. This model would be particularly useful in discussions pertaining to the moral life.

## Video and/or Internet Catechesis

Pastors and catechists are **discouraged** from basing catechesis *largely* upon videos, DVD's, internet, IVAN, radio, CD's or any other medium that entails "watching" or "hearing" an inaccessible person. The aim of catechesis is intimacy with a real person, Jesus Christ and the Church, His Family. While the teachings presented on these mediums may be orthodox, they cannot replace a relationship with a real catechist who loves Jesus Christ, who loves them, and who the student can see, hear and touch. This need for a living witness of the Faith is for both adults and children especially in our modern age where an inordinate amount of time is spent with the inanimate thus limiting the opportunities for true and human relationships.

## Lectionary-Based Catechesis

Pastors and catechists are **discouraged** from the *exclusive* use of lectionary-based catechesis for grades Kindergarten through 12. These materials can and should be used to supplement the curricula and regularly to prepare for Sunday Eucharist. The lectionary is not intended to present the Faith systematically.

## Closing Comments

In *On Catechesis In Our Time* (CT), Pope John Paul II reminds us that "the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis" (CT 67). Good catechesis must proceed from and call all who are catechized to fuller and deeper participation in the life of the parish. Regardless of the model chosen for catechesis, the effectiveness of that model must be measured in relation to its support of the participation in the life of the parish.

The parish "must rediscover its vocation, which is to be a fraternal and welcoming family home, where those who have been baptized and confirmed become aware of forming the Family of God, the People of God. In that home, the bread of good doctrine and the Eucharistic Bread are broken for them in abundance, in the setting of the one act of worship; from that home they are sent out day by day to their apostolic mission in all the centers of activity of the life of the world" (CT 67).