The Fargo Catechetical Institute
Presents

The Gift of the Catechism

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Study Guide

Recorded at Sts. Anne and Joachim Church
Fargo, North Dakota

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During the Year of Faith
Introduction

Schedule each group session to be 2 hours long, which will allow for sufficient time for discussion. The length of each session on the DVD:

- Part I: 52 minutes
- Part II: 48 minutes
- Part III: 46 minutes
- Part IV: 44 minutes

Set up a DVD player and a television or a video projector. For each participant have a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church plus a copy of this Study Guide. Tip: have them write their name on the front cover, collect them after each session, and distribute them at the next session.

While this Study Guide is intended for catechists, it may be used by any interested parishioner.

Prelude (optional)

Before beginning the first DVD presentation, spend about 5-10 minutes discussing the following questions. Answers will vary.

1. Are you familiar with the Catechism of the Catholic Church? How much of it have you read? When do you use it?

2. Do you know how to navigate inside the Catechism of the Catholic Church (paragraph numbers, footnotes, cross references, indices, etc.)? Do you think of it as a reference work (like an encyclopedia or dictionary)?

3. What are your initial thoughts on why someone would read the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Do you think it is meant to be read by everyone, by catechists or just by “specialists”?

4. Consider your thoughts on what a gift is and what the word means. Do you consider the Catechism of the Catholic Church a gift intended personally for you? If so, how is it a gift?
Part I: The New Evangelization

Discuss these questions following the DVD presentation.

1. St. Bernard of Clairvaux says we should be like (circle one):

   (a) the dead sea  (b) a reservoir  (c) a channel

   Why should we be like this? ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. What is the Good News (a one sentence summary)?

   (hint: see CCC 422): ____________________________

   Why was it necessary for God to reveal this Good News?

   (hint: CCC 421): ____________________________

3. What is Evangelization?

   Evangelization is ____________________________
   ____________________________

   What three stages of evangelization did Dr. Willey identify? Briefly describe them.

   Stage 1: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Stage 2: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Stage 3: ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
4. Discuss how you can improve each of these three stages of evangelization in your life. What suggestions do you have for the parish to help you in these areas?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. What does the phrase “economy of salvation” mean?

The “economy of salvation” is ________________________________

How does God accomplish this? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. Who is the primary cause? (hint: CCC 308) ________________________________

Who are secondary causes? _____________________________________________

7. What are three ways we can deliberately enter into God’s providential plan? (hint: CCC 307)

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________

8. Dr. Petroc shares an analogy of God and children in the kitchen. God’s plan includes small children and broken eggs to make (circle one):

   (a) a cake  (b) a banquet  (c) an omelet

9. Share a concrete example when you recognized God’s providential plan at work in your life or in the life of another person.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Part II: The Deposit of Faith

Discuss these questions following the DVD presentation.

1. □ True □ False (check one): “This is the first time in the history of the Church that a catechism was written for the whole people of God.”

2. Dr. Willey talked about his struggle with understanding how “Guarding the Deposit of Faith is the mission which is entrusted to the Church.” How are we to understand guarding the Deposit of Faith as our mission?

Discussion could include the following points:

- the Catechism is more than learning a list of stuff we have to know;
- we should not be afraid to tell others about it because we might make mistakes;
- every adult should study it and pray with it so they can hand it on.

3. Dr. Willey used the word “Christocentric”.

“Christocentric” means ________________________________

Why is Christocentricity so important when teaching the faith?
(hint: CCC 427) ________________________________

4. Briefly study paragraph 331. Discuss how this paragraph in the Catechism of the Catholic Church treats angels in a Christocentric way.

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

5. The picture on the cover was chosen because it symbolizes what is contained in the *Catechism*. Describe each symbol and explain how it helps us understand what is inside the *Catechism*:

The Shepherd: ________________________________

______________________________

The lamb: ________________________________

______________________________

The tree: ________________________________

______________________________

The fruit: ________________________________

______________________________

Branches grafted on the tree: ________________________________

______________________________

Shepherd’s staff: ________________________________

______________________________

The stump / chair: ________________________________

______________________________

The panpipes: ________________________________

______________________________
Part III: The Symphony of Truth

Discuss these questions following the DVD presentation.

1. Several universal catechisms were published, each with a unique style and intended audience. Match the terms on the left with its description on the right.

   __ Catechism of the Catholic Church  A. a question and answer catechism for adults
   __ Compendium of the Catechism       B. a question and answer catechism for young people
   __ YOUCAT                              C. the universal catechism which the others condense and simplify

2. The shepherd playing the panpipes makes us think of music and how we like to listen to it; its beauty attracts us. What does this image teach us about how to pass on the truths of the Faith?

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. Give an example of a time when you taught or explained a difficult truth by appealing to beauty. (For example, what was your tone of voice? What was your underlining attitude?)

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. Unless you understand the whole structure (the “symphony”), you will not know how all the small pieces fit together (the “notes” and “measures” of music). Complete the following titles of the main parts of the Catechism (if necessary, refer to the Table of Contents):

   Part One: The _______________ of the Faith
   Part Two: _______________ of the Christian ________
   Part Three: _______ in Christ
   Part Four: Christian __________

Remember, the four pillars of the Catechism are like the four parts of a symphony.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is Christocentric: it always links us back to Jesus Christ. Jesus was sent by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit to save us. God has visited His people (CCC 422).

5. What is the central mystery of the Faith, “the light that enlightens them”? (hint: CCC 234)

6. What does the word “mystery” mean in this context? (check all that apply)
   □ a truth known by us with certainty
   □ something we have to work out and solve ourselves
   □ something only known to us because it was revealed by God

We enter into the mystery of the Trinity by acting in faith; the more we trust him, the more God reveals Himself.

7. Give an example of a time when you entered into the mystery, that is, when you asked God and He responded to your need or problem by revealing Himself or His plan for you.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

“The Gift of the Catechism” Study Guide, page 8
8. Jesus said, “I am the Son.” What is the significance of Jesus revealing himself as “the Son”? (hint: to whom does Jesus want to introduce us?)

9. The opening sections on the Church (CCC 748-769) show how the Catechism is not only Christocentric but also Trinitarian. Write one phrase about the Church which is rooted in our understanding of each person of the Trinity:

   Jesus, the Son (hint: CCC 748):

   The Holy Spirit (hint: CCC 749):

   God the Father (hint: CCC 759):
Part IV: An Organic Synthesis

Discuss these questions following the DVD presentation.

1. Dr. Willey spoke on the “Aim and Intended Readership” of this Catechism (CCC 11). Why are we being told about the “sources” of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in the “aim” of the Catechism?

2. What are the Catechism’s four principal sources? (hint: CCC 11)
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 

3. What does it mean to say that the Catechism is an organic synthesis which should be seen as a unified whole (hint: CCC 18)?

   How does the structure of the Catechism help you to see the organic synthesis? (hint: what “navigational aid” helps you see the connections?)
4. As Dr. Wiley demonstrates, the four Parts of the Catechism are interconnected, that is, the same threads are woven throughout. As you are directed to a different paragraph in the Catechism, you first identify what main Part you are in. Having a primary question in mind for each Part will quickly focus you to a deeper understanding of the topic you are investigating. Match each question on the right to the Part of the Catechism, listed on the left.

___ Part 1: Profession of Faith       A. How does this show me how to live in Christ?

___ Part 2: Celebration of the Christian Mystery       B. How does this help me know and understand God and my faith?

___ Part 3: Life in Christ       C. How does this help me relate to God in prayer?

___ Part 4: Christian Prayer       D. How does this help me worship God and celebrate the mysteries of Christ and the Church?

5. Dr. Willey said that the Catechism of the Catholic Church can help us pray. He gave the example of how to meditate on “the desire for God.”

Look up the following paragraphs and write some simple notes about something that strikes you. Spend a few minutes sharing and then pray about them (see below).

CCC 27 (is in Part ___): ________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

CCC 355 (is in Part ___): ________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Prayer: Invite everyone to pray in silence, considering how God is calling them to receive the gift of “the desire for God”. Remind them that they should not try to pray with all the material, but should stop and pray with just one paragraph or one sentence; they should remain with the text that moves their heart.

Opening Prayer: Make the Sign of the Cross, pray the “Our Father”, and ask God, “Lord, what do You want to reveal to me as I consider ‘the desire for God’? Where are You leading me?” (Allow at least 10 minutes of silence to pray.)

Sharing (optional): Spend a few minutes of the session sharing the fruit of the prayer. This is a time for reverence, a time to respect others as they reveal how God spoke to them. Conclude by thanking the Lord and praying a “Glory Be”.

Take Home Exercise: Examine paragraph 307, which addresses providence and secondary causes. Follow the cross references to the other sections of the Catechism and see how the Lord is leading you to receive the gift of the “economy of salvation”. Using the prayer method above (that is, being silent with the text for at least 10 minutes); see what it reveals about your personal vocation.