

Be An Evangelizing Catechist!

- 1.) Be a person of prayer. Pray for your children and their families. Pray for *yourself*. Pray privately and within the liturgical/sacramental life of your parish community. Take time for stillness and silence with God.
- 2.) Provide a gentle, firm, consistent presence. Arrive early to welcome each child by name. Strive to achieve respect prior to seeking to be liked.
- 3.) Listen to and take to heart the significant things going on in students' lives. (Work to foster an environment where they will be open to sharing.)
- 4.) Create a physical setting that is comfortable and conducive to meaningful learning.
- 5.) Come to the session well-prepared and thus, more confident and more relaxed.
- 6.) Find ways to reach out and connect with parents (or guardians). See yourself as an evangelizer of households and not only a catechist of children. Parents are much in need of evangelization and faith formation today. Reach out to them and find ways to bring the learning home for families to explore together.
- 7.) Minister in relationship to other catechists. The personal bonds and creative sharing will be a blessing to you and your ministry...and theirs! Utilize parish and community resources to enrich the formation experience.
- 8.) See yourself as more than just a medium to Catholic faith. The catechist is an embodiment of Christ and the Church!
- 9.) Help your learners to experience Catholic faith and community as *good news*. We learn more when there is humor and hope, enthusiasm and joy.
- 10.) Pray well with the children. This means:
 - Dedicate sufficient time and quality to the experience
 - Incorporate a liturgical dimension (including ritual action) that fosters a Catholic liturgical sensibility in the children and makes Sunday Mass more meaningful
 - Allow them to participate in substantial and creative ways
 - Give them the opportunity to encounter the sacred up close...incorporate a meditative silence, involve Catholic sacramentals and special items (religious or not) from their families, etc.
 - Provide experiences designed to foster a living and personal relationship with God

- 11.) Help them to gain a command of:
 - The Catholic approach to Scripture
 - Distinctive elements of Catholic faith (i.e. liturgy, various prayer traditions, the Pope and apostolic succession, Eucharist and our sacramental system, Mary and the saints, social justice teaching)
- 12.) Remember that children (and adults) learn more, and more deeply, by *doing* than by listening...and even more by *teaching*. Use this to find creative ways to make the learning deep and lasting.
- 13.) Always strive to make connections that show relevance:
 - Between the issues of the day/their lives...and what we believe
 - Between what we believe and how we are called to live ... *discipleship*

Service can be one of the important ways to make the learning real and relevant!
- 14.) Teach Catholic faith fully and faithfully. Share *your* faith experience (with conviction) insofar as it can strengthen the process of faith integration and help to foster conversion.
- 15.) Be authentic. Don't pretend to have all the answers. Be *with* them on this journey of faith discovery. Try to find answers from good sources, when possible. But also help them grow comfortable with the concept of mystery, the unknowable dimension of God.
- 16.) Utilize a variety of learning modes so as to form the whole person. Since catechesis is much more than a strictly academic subject, care must be given to create a learning dynamic that attends to intellect, emotion, spirituality and human experience in proper balance.
- 17.) If there is a parish Catholic school, make creative connections:
 - Catechist to teacher
 - Student to student
- 18.) Form your children to be *evangelizers*, in their actions and in their words, at home and in the world.
- 19.) Be truly open to the Holy Spirit, both in prayer beforehand and during the session. On occasion the lesson plan will need to be adjusted.
- 20.) *Desire to continually grow in your personal relationship with God.* See yourself as a work-in-progress. Engage in catechist formation that develops your knowledge, your skills and your interior faith life in a way that is integrative. Seek out opportunities to grow as a person of faith, not just as a catechist.

(Adapted from "Be An Evangelizing Catechist", Catechist Magazine, September, 2010)
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