

# Assessment

**Assessment** has two primary purposes. The first enables the catechist to determine what the children have learned. The second purpose relates to self-evaluation and allows the catechist to reflect on how effectively the lesson was taught. The methods used to measure progress include formal, informal and authentic assessment. The kind of assessment used is determined by several factors, including the performance indicator taught, the number of children and their ages, the amount of time available, the surroundings, etc.



**Formal assessment** is done through oral and/or written quizzes, essays, etc. Because most catechetical programs function under time constraints, most formal assessment is done orally. Jesus provided us with a wonderful model of oral formal assessment every time he taught his disciples. He sat with his disciples and crowds of people who listened to his messages. Then he asked questions until he knew whether or not the people understood the meaning of what he had shared. This process gave Jesus the opportunity to observe reactions and listen for understanding.



**Informal assessment** is done by observing how the learner participates in activities, works independently or in a group, responds during discussion, etc. This can be done by assigning specific short tasks, and asking the learner to tell, write about or show what he or she is doing. Or, it may be on-going, as would happen as progress is observed over the course of time. Either way, progress can be heard or seen via written work, non-verbal body language, and verbal response.

**Authentic assessment** is performance-based and requires that what has been learned is put into practice. Opportunities for service must be provided so progress can be witnessed. Authentic assessment can also be done through an accumulation of work, called a portfolio, completed by the learner over a period of time.



Determining the methods to use when assessing progress often depends on how performance indicators have been presented. Keep in mind that some lessons just call naturally for discussion, others lend themselves easily to a craft project, while yet others are best evaluated in written forms. Regardless of the manner of assessment used, the end goal is to determine whether or not the learner has grasped the concept that was taught.



## Effective Assessment

Know what standard/concept you are going to present.

Identify the performance indicator(s) for the lesson.

Determine how you want the children to show you what they have learned.

Plan your lesson with these things in mind.