

Lesson Planning

and

Assessment

The Liturgical Year

Catholic Traditions

+

Customs

Family Prayers

Sacramental Preparation

For

First Penance/Reconciliation

First Communion

Confirmation

Resources

Credits

Credits

Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ
Diocesan Director of Christian Formation

Heidi Macko
Ogdensburg Regional Director

Sister Elizabeth Menard, OP
Plattsburgh Regional Director

Michael Wagner
Watertown Regional Director

Gidget Kimble
Word Processing

Dianna Shaver
Word Processing

Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
-for initiating the project-

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.

Catholic Traditions and Customs

According to the Temporal Cycle (L. tempus, meaning “time” or “season”)

Advent

Advent is the beginning of the church year. The theme of the season, from the Latin word *adventus*, revolves around the coming of the Christ child. From the 17th through the 23rd of December, the alleluia verses are based on the O Antiphons. The theme for the first Sunday of Advent is based on the End Times, the theme for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays revolves around John the Baptist, and the theme for the 4th Sunday of Advent is about the Incarnation.

Traditions and Customs

Advent Wreath Jesse Tree Advent House/Calendar Manger/Creche'

Liturgical Colors for the Season

violet/purple and rose for Gaudete, the 3rd Sunday as a symbol of rejoicing

Special Feast Days

December 6th.....Feast of Saint Nicholas
December 8th.....Feast of the Immaculate Conception
December 12th.....Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Christmas

The birth of Jesus, or the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, is celebrated on December 25th. The Season of Christmas extends through the Feast of the Baptism.

Traditions and Customs

Christmas Trees Window lights & luminaries Nativity Scene Christmas Candle
Holly, Mistletoe & Poinsettias Christmas Carols Christmas Pageants
The Twelve Days of Christmas Exchanging Gifts & Kris Kringle

Liturgical Color for the Season - White

Special Feast Days

December 25th.....Feast of the Nativity of the Lord
December 26th.....Feast of Saint Stephen, martyr
December 27th.....Feast of St. John the Evangelist, martyr
December 28th.....Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs
Sunday following the Feast of the Birth of Jesus..... Feast of the Holy Family
January 1st.....Holy Mary Mother of God
Ending the Twelve Days of Christmas...Feast of the Epiphany
The Baptism of the Lord



Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time resumes with the first Sunday after Pentecost.

Traditions and Customs

Although many and varied, few traditions and customs are connected to the Sundays of Ordinary Time. Most are related to particular feast days celebrated during this season.

Liturgical Color for the Season - Green

Special Feast Days

February 2nd.....Presentation of the Lord
February 3rd.....Feast of Saint Blaise/
Blessing of the Throats
February 14th...Feast of Saint Valentine
Trinity Sunday
March 25th.....Feast of the Annunciation
Feast of Corpus Christi/
The Body and Blood of Christ
Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
(on the Friday following Corpus Christi)
August 15th.....Feast of the Assumption
September 8th.....Feast of the Nativity
of Mary
November 1st.....Feast of All Saints
November 2nd.....Feast of All Souls
Feast of Christ the King



Easter

Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is a moveable feast celebrated on the 1st Sunday following the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox and ends with the celebration of Pentecost.

Traditions and Customs

Easter fire, Paschal (Easter) Candle,
Lamb, Easter Eggs, Lilies,
Blessing of Easter Baskets

Liturgical Color for the Season - White

Special Feast Days

Easter Vigil
Feast of the Resurrection/Easter Sunday
Ascension Thursday

Feast of Pentecost...celebrated fifty days following Easter to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Red is the liturgical color used for this day that marks the official end to the Easter Season.



Ordinary Time

Called Ordinary time because of the comparison to the richness of the Sundays of the Christmas and Easter seasons, this period is when the special character of the Lord's Day, or little Easter, is experienced and reminds us of the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Liturgical Color for the Season—Green

Lent

The word Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which means lengthening. Lent is a period of penance, fasting, abstinence and almsgiving, lasting forty days, as preparation for baptism and the renewal of baptismal vows. Preceded by Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent.

Traditions and Customs

Stations of the Cross Pretzels/Hot Cross Buns
40 Hours Devotion Holy Week Observances Palms

Liturgical Color for the Season - Purple

Special Feast Days

March 17th.....Feast of Saint Patrick
March 19th.....Feast of Saint Joseph
Palm/Passion Sunday

Sacred Triduum

Holy Thursday...Washing of the Feet, Chapel of Adoration, Chrism Mass, Commemoration of the Lord's Supper, stripping of the altar
Good Friday...Liturgy of the Word, Veneration of the Cross, Holy Communion
Holy Saturday...Preparation for the Easter Vigil celebration

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

The Jesus Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Divine Praises (Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament)

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.

Family Prayers



“Lord, teach us to pray...”

(Luke 11:1)

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;
blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb,
Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the
hour of our death. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom
come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Morning Prayer

My God, I offer you today all I think and do and say,
uniting it with what was done on earth, by Jesus Christ, your Son.
Amen.
(Ages 3-8)

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my
prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day, in union with the most
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my
sins, for the intentions of all, and in particular for the Holy Father's
intentions. (Ages 10 and up)

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our
hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we
send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn
then, most gracious Advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us. And
after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb,
Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O Holy
Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of
Christ. Amen.

Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus takes up his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets his mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.



- The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:17)
- The Crucifixion (John 19:28-30)

Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday and Sunday)

- The Resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:6-8)
- The Ascension of Jesus into heaven (Acts 1:10-11)
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4)
- The Assumption of Mary into heaven
- The Crowning of Mary as queen of heaven



Act of Faith

My God, I firmly believe you are one God in three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe in Jesus Christ, your son, who became man died for our sins, and who will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, trusting in your infinite goodness and promise, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and redeemer. Amen.

Act of Love

My God, O love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all-good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, we fly unto you, O virgin of virgins, our mother. To you do we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer us. Amen.

Evening Prayer

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace After Meals

We give you thanks, almighty God, for these and all your gifts, which we have received through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. Enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they will be created. Let us pray: Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful. In the same Spirit, help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen.



Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, **and** in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, **who** was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended **into hell**; on the third day he rose again **from the dead**; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of **God** the Father **almighty**; **from there** he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all **things visible and invisible**. **I believe** in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only **Begotten** Son of God, **born** of the Father **before all ages**. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial** with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, **and by** the Holy Spirit **was incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, **he suffered death** and was buried, **and rose again on the third day** in **accordance with** the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. **I believe** in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, **who** with the Father and the Son **is adored** and glorified, **who** has spoken through the prophets. **I believe in** one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. **I confess** one baptism for the forgiveness of sins **and I look forward to** the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.



Angelus

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit,

Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
Be it done unto me according to your word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts that we to whom the incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of angel may, by his passion and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Regina Coeli

 (replaces Angelus in Eastertime)

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia.

Has risen as he said, alleluia.

Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.

Let us pray: O God, who by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world; grant, we beg you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rosary

Joyful Mysteries

 (Monday and Saturday)

- The Annunciation (Luke 1:30-33)
- The Visitation (Luke 1:50-53)
- The Birth of Our Lord (Luke 2:10-11)
- Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:29-32)
- The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:48-52)

Luminous Mysteries

 (Thursday)

- The Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan (Matthew 3: 13-17)
- The Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-12)
- The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 3-7)
- The Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-8)
- The Institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22:14-20)

Sorrowful Mysteries

 (Tuesday and Friday)

- The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:38-39)
- The Scourging at the Pillar (John 19:1)
- The Crowning of Thorns (Mark 15:16-17)

Family Prayers

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil. Amen.

Morning Prayer

My God, I offer you today all I think and do and say,
uniting it with what was done on earth, by Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.
(Ages 3-8)

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O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my
prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day, in union with the most
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of
all, and in particular for the Holy Father's intentions. (Ages 10 and up)

Evening Prayer

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the
busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in your
mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit,
Hail Mary...

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Be it done unto me according to your word.
Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,
And dwelt among us.
Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.
Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts that we to whom the incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of angel may, by his passion and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia.
Has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.

Let us pray: O God, who by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world; grant, we beg you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

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- The Scourging at the Pillar (John 19:1)
- The Crowning of Thorns (Mark 15:16-17)
- The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:17)
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Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this

confidence, we fly unto you, O virgin of virgins, our mother. To you do we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer us. Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus takes up his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets his mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
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8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
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10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
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Prayer of St. Francis

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where there is hatred, let me sow love;
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Divine Praises (Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament)

Blessed be God.

Blessed be his Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be his most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.

Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God in his angels and in his saints.

Lesson Plan for _____ The _____ Sunday of _____

Standard addressed: _____

Performance Indicators: _____

Assessment Method: _____



Catechist Manual pages: _____

Learner Text pages: _____



Gathering Activity: _____

Prayer: _____

Group Activity: _____

Craft: _____



Handouts to be used: _____

Multimedia Resources: _____

Other Materials needed: _____

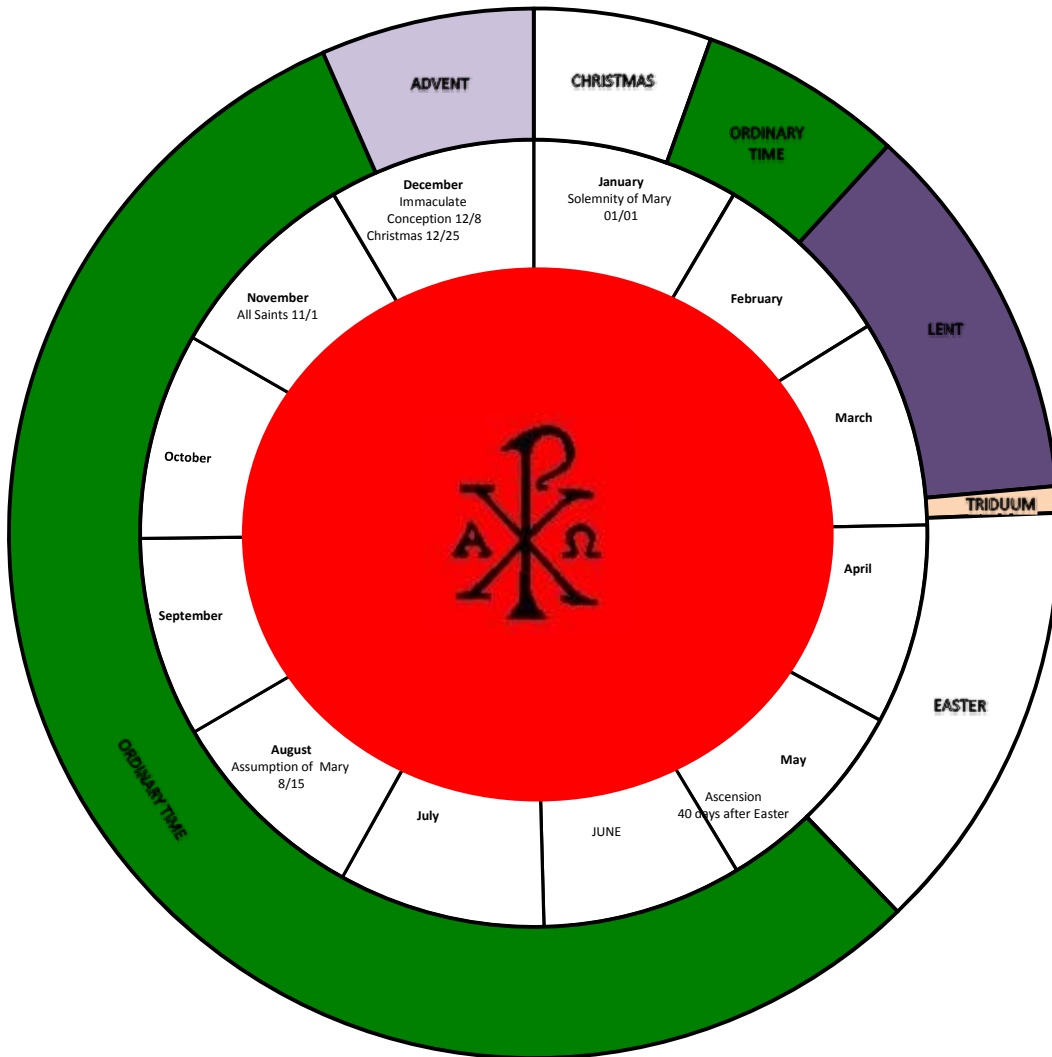
To be sent home: _____

Additional Notes: _____

Things to change the next time I teach this lesson: _____

**Seasons and additional Holy Days of the Liturgical Year
as celebrated in the United States**

Every Sunday is a Holy Day of Obligation



Planning Your Catechetical Lesson

Planning is a very important part of your role as a catechist. Because catechists want to assist parents and guardians with handing on the faith in the very best way possible, preparation and planning are essential. So, let's get started with the toughest part ...the nuts and bolts of good lesson planning.



Determine which **standard** is being taught with the lesson. The standards are offered as a set of expectations to reinforce that the most important concepts are being taught at each level. If you know you are going to have more lessons in the book than weeks in the Catechetical Calendar, choose your lessons judiciously, and schedule those that meet the standards so those lessons are taught first. It might also be possible that more than one lesson in the book will meet a given standard, so the option may exist to combine some of the lessons from the book.

Identify the **performance indicators**. The performance indicators include the knowledge you want the children to have and the skills they should be able to display when the lesson has been completed. *Everything* you put into your plan should support the end goal of meeting the standards and performance indicators .

It is important to remember that, at the end of the lesson, you want to know if what you think you taught has actually been learned; therefore, some means of **assessment** or measuring of progress must be determined. You should ask yourself *how* you will know if the children learned the lesson. For example, a catechist for young children might write the following: "The children will be able to name elements of God's creation and tell why they are good gifts from God." To write, "The children will understand God's creation as a gift to us," does not give any concrete means of measuring what has been learned about the concept, so words like understand, feel, grasp, realize, etc. should be avoided. Instead, use action words that give you a concrete way of assessing/measuring progress. Finally, be sure that whatever you plan for the lesson feeds directly into helping you reach the desired performance indicators.

Assessment of learning can be done in a wide variety of ways. In parish faith formation programs, most assessment will be done orally or visually and is carried on continuously throughout a lesson. An alert catechist can see and hear when the children are "on target" with the performance indicators. A truly great catechist is willing to use the assessment to evaluate how well he or she transmitted the information, as well as determining how much was learned by the children. (To learn more about the assessment process, see the information that immediately follows these planning pages.)



Find the pages you will be using in the **catechist's manual** and the corresponding pages in the **learner materials**. Write them into your plan and stick with them. They will also be invaluable to a substitute if an illness or emergency prevents you from being present for the session.



Now that you have identified the performance indicators, know what you are going to teach, where the standard can be found in the materials at hand and how you will assess progress, the fun begins. It is time to think about how you are going to help the children learn the concept.

A **Gathering Activity** can be a real help to a catechist. It gives the children something to do as you wait for all of them to come into the room so you can begin the lesson. The Gathering Activity can be something used to help review past lessons, or to introduce the lesson for the day. It is also a great way to help avoid classroom management problems while you are greeting arrivals at the door. Try setting some books around for reading, a worksheet, a puzzle, a puppet theater area, coloring a banner or some other activity that can be done without instruction from you. Just ask the first child in the room to be your helper and tell others what to do when they arrive.



When the children have arrived and are in place, your lesson should *always begin with prayer*. Have a prayer space arranged and engage the group in the process of gathering around it to hear a Scripture reading and offer prayer. Please take time to plan this. The children will come to recognize prayer as a way to begin all things in life. Do remember though, that this is not the only time for prayer with the group. Incorporate it as often and in as many different forms as your lesson naturally supports.

What **group activities** are you planning on using for your lesson? Will they be designed for everyone to work together, or will they be best done in small groups? If you want everyone to work together, be sure to build that into your activity design. Remember, while every child should feel included, it is best to avoid forcing participation. Gentle encouragement will garner the best results and the children will appreciate your sensitivity. If you are working in small groups, do you need to have assistance from a parent or other helper? Group activities, when carefully planned, are a great way to build community and can help you make a quick assessment of who has mastered the concept you are trying to teach.



Craft projects are those things done to reinforce a concept and often sent home for the children to use as a memory tool for sharing the day's lesson with their families. Handmade treasures are always well received! They let the parents know what you have been working on and enable them to reinforce the concept at home throughout the week. Craft projects should be catechist-tested in advance. There is nothing worse than trying to explain to children what should be done only to find it is too difficult or too confusing for the age level. Both lead to frustration for the catechist and the child...and may even breed dissension among the ranks! Keep crafts simple, have enough materials on hand for everyone (and a guest or two), plan on showing them a completed sample before beginning, and complete another one along with the children as you demonstrate the instructions step by step. The most important thing to remember about crafts is that they are not to be used as a time filler! *The children should know why they are doing the craft and be able to connect it with the lesson for the day.*



Handouts have the potential to be really great things...or really bad things. If you are running off materials to fill time after the lesson or to keep the children busy, then you should probably return to the nuts and bolts of lesson planning and re-think your objective. On the positive side, as Gathering Activities, handouts can provide a great mini review lesson. They can also be used as partner activities to reinforce a concept. Regardless of how you use them, be sure to make enough copies (well in advance of class) for everyone, with a few extras for guests. Because we really don't "grade" things in faith formation, it isn't necessary for children to complete them independently. Handouts can be a great tool for partnering and small groups. They also make great things to send home for sharing with parents.

We all need a little variety to keep us interested. The same is true for children. Be sure to include some **multimedia resources** in your lesson planning. Children like to get up and move, so the right music can really add a lot of reinforcement and provide an opportunity for the children to get up and move around within a structured framework. Sometimes, a video (pre-viewed by the catechist, of course) is a great way to introduce a lesson - or to wrap one up. If time is a problem, try using only a portion of a video to help you illustrate a point. Bible activity computer games are now available. Allowing children to write their own songs about the lesson and perform them using rhythm instruments can be a fun way to reinforce and review. Whatever you choose, prepare in advance, be creative and mix it up a little to keep the children interested.



Know what you need and have it available. A great catechist allows for emergencies...like a lesson that didn't take as long as he or she thought it would. In this instance, having **other materials** on hand is only wise. Be sure to list everything you need for your lesson, and some extras for just-in-case, so you will be well prepared to meet the challenges of the lesson you have planned. Fumbling through without the proper tools is the first way to invite chaos into the classroom. Remember, if you have what you need, there will be no time for tom-foolery.

Parents are the primary catechists and we are available only to assist them with the faith formation of their children. Keep parents informed and give them the opportunity to do what they need to do by **sending materials home** for them to review and use throughout the week. Even materials from lessons that aren't completed, and lessons you know you will not be able to get to during the year, can be sent home for parents to help their children complete. Don't ask for the pages to be returned to you...the parents will know if the children completed them correctly. And they will be thrilled to be involved in what you are doing for their children.



Additional Notes and **Things to Change the next time I teach this lesson** are the places where the catechist takes stock of how well he or she did, how well the children learned and what needs to be done to re-structure the lesson once all that assessment information is taken into account. Although not always easy, it is important for the catechist to be honest with himself or herself if real progress is to be made by everyone involved in the ministry of catechesis.

Recommended Printed Materials

Catechism of the Catholic Church. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 1994

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 2006

General Director for Catechesis. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 1997

National Directory for Catechesis. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 2005

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 1999

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry. United States Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 1997

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Study Edition. International Commission on English in the Liturgy and Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988

The New American Bible with Revised New Testament and Psalms. Woodhills, CA: Benziger Publishing co., 1991

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 2006

Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, General Editor Austin Flannery, OP Northport, NY Costello Publishing Company, 1975

Please also check out the Christian Formation website at:
<http://www.dioogdensburg.org/cf/index.html>

Preparing a Child/Teen for Confirmation

General Comments:

- The revised Rite of Confirmation indicates that Episcopal conferences designate the appropriate age for Confirmation.
- In the United States, the age of Confirmation for children and young people varies widely from diocese to diocese; it can be designated between the age of discretion through around the age of sixteen.
- Since age levels vary so, a single catechesis cannot be prescribed but general guidelines can be articulated.

The Child or Teen through good catechesis

- understands that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul.
- sees that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to their faith in words and deeds.
- understands the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts and fruits.
- receives catechesis that is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences.
- receives instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula.
- experiences the involvement of parents and sponsors in the catechetical preparation for Confirmation.
- learns that the Bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- has a general understanding/appreciation of one's life in Christ, and one's commitment to God and Church.

Learning about this sacrament is on-going. Children/teens have the right to a fuller catechesis each year.

Adapted from the NDC, page 122-123

Preparing to Celebrate Confirmation

General Concepts

Sacraments of Initiation
Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
Significance of Confirmation
Significance of a Sponsor
Role of the Holy Spirit
Body of Christ
Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Signs of the Holy Spirit
Fruits of the Holy Spirit
The Rite of Confirmation
Seal of the Holy Spirit
The Law of Love
Corporal Works of Mercy
Spiritual Works of Mercy
Cardinal Virtues
The Church
Significance of the Creed
Discipleship
Journey of Faith
Communion of Saints
The Mission of the Church
Christian Maturity
Stewardship

Prayers

The Apostles Creed
Prayer to the Holy Spirit
The Nicene Creed
Liturgical Mass
Prayer of St Francis

Some Scripture to Remember

Mark 3: 14-19	Calling of the Twelve
Matthew 22:37-40	The Two Great Commandments
Acts 2: 1-39	Pentecost
Acts 2: 42-47; Acts 4:32-37	Early Community
Mark: 8:34-38	Discipleship
I Cor. 12: 13-26	Body of Christ
Mark 1: 4-11	Baptism of Jesus
Matt 28:18-20	Commissioning of the Apostles
John 16: 16:14	Coming of the Paraclete

Words to Know

Anointing	Catechumen	Chrism
Counsel	Covenant	Creed
Discipleship	Fear of the Lord	Fortitude
Indelible	Intercessions	Initiation
Justice	Kingdom of God	Knowledge
Pentecost	Piety	Prudence
Rite	Seal	Sponsor
Temperance	Understanding	Vocation
Wisdom		

Preparing a Child for First Communion

General comments:

- Preparation begins in the home and within the family since families support Christian and human values that form a child's understanding of Eucharist.
- Families participate in the Eucharist in order to understand more fully its value for one's life and to experience the liturgical prayer of the assembly.
- Parents, Catechetical Leaders and Catechists together determine when children have reached the age of reason and are ready to receive Communion for the first time.
- The Pastor has a responsibility to determine the readiness of each child.
- Parents have the right and duty to be involved in preparing their children for First Communion.
- Parents also grow in their understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist in order for them to catechize their children effectively.
- Catechesis on the Mass, provided in systematic parish catechetical programs, is an indispensable part of preparation of children for reception of Communion.
- Catechesis should help children participate actively and consciously in the Mass.

The child, through good catechesis

- understands that the Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all and it commemorates Jesus' last meal with his disciples.

- understands the truths of faith regarding the Eucharist.
- sees that they can now take part actively with God's people in the Eucharist, sharing with the people at the Lord's table.
- sees the need to be baptized and is prepared to receive First Reconciliation before First Communion.
- understands God's love, Jesus' sacrifice and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- understands that "the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ" and that bread and wine are his living body (Real Presence).
- sees the difference between Communion and ordinary bread.
- understands the meaning of receiving both the bread and wine and sees the value of participating actively and consciously in the Mass.
- receives Christ's Body and Blood in an informed and reverent manner.

Learning about this sacrament is on-going. Children have the rights to a fuller catechesis each year.

Adapted from the NDC, page 126-128.

Preparing to Celebrate First Eucharist

General Concepts					
God's Creation					
The Gift of Family					
The Holy Trinity					
The Creed					
The Significance of Baptism					
The Church Family					
Unconditional Love					
Liturgy of the Word					
Liturgy of the Eucharist					
Jesus in the Eucharist					
Community					
Service to Others					
Prayers					
Sign of the Cross					
Our Father					
Hail Mary					
Glory Be					
Grace Before and After Meals					
Liturgical Responses					



Draw a happy face in the box when you talk about each concept!

Some Scripture to Read Together

John 6:1-14...Loaves and Fishes

Acts 2:42-44...Breaking of the Bread

Matthew 26:26-28...The Last Supper

John 15:1-5...I Am the Vine

Mark 4:1-9...Rocky Ground

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-10...Living in Love

Matthew 4:18-22...Jesus Calls His Disciples

Matthew 28:16-20...Go and Make Disciples



Do you know what these words mean?

Creed Eucharist Easter service

communion God's life in me = grace

baptism holiness sacrifice

peace Apostles Holy Spirit

Kingdom of God Body of Christ

Liturgy of the Word Liturgy of the Eucharist

Gospel sacraments

homily disciples

resurrection



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Preparing a Child for First Penance/First Reconciliation

General Comments:

- Parents and the parish catechetical leader, with the pastor, are responsible for determining when children are ready to receive this sacrament.
- Readiness includes knowledge of the person of Jesus, the Gospel message of forgiveness, knowledge of sin and its effect, and an understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion.
- Children must receive the Sacrament of Penance-Reconciliation for the first time prior to their first reception of Eucharist.
- Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation in order to identify each sacrament clearly.
- Before receiving First Communion, the child must be familiar with the revised Rite of Reconciliation and be at ease with the reception of the sacrament.
- Catechesis for children receiving this sacrament must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances.
- Since the family is intimately involved with the formation of a child's moral conscience and ordinarily integrates the child into the wider ecclesial communities, parents should be involved in the preparation of their children to affirm and reinforce frequent participation in the sacraments. They orient the child toward God and encourage continual growth in the understanding of God's mercy and love.

The child, through the help of good catechesis

- recognizes God's unconditional love for self and all people.
- seeks Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation.
- recognizes the presence of good and evil in the world.
- recognizes his/her capacity for both good and evil.
- understands the meaning of symbols, gestures, prayers and scriptures that are part of the Rite of Reconciliation.
- understands how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation.
- understands that "sacramental Confession" is a means offered children of the Church to obtain pardon for sin.
- understands that sacramental Confession is necessary if one has committed serious sin.

Learning about this sacrament is on-going. Children have the rights to a fuller Catechesis each year.

Adapted from the NDC, page 135-136.

Preparing to Celebrate First Reconciliation



Draw a happy face in the box when you talk about each concept!

General Concepts					
God's Creation					
The Gift of Family					
The Holy Trinity					
Baptism					
The Church Family					
Unconditional Love					
Mistakes vs. Sins					
Examination of Conscience					
Ten Commandments					
The Two Great Commandments					
Confession					
Absolution					
The Sacrament of Penance					
The Rite of Reconciliation					
Prayers					
Sign of the Cross					
Our Father					
Hail Mary					
Glory Be					
Act of Contrition					

Some Scripture to Read Together

Luke 2:22 and Mark 1:9-11 on baptism

Luke 15: 11-24...The Prodigal Son

Luke 15: 4-6...The Good Shepherd

Luke 19: 1-12...The Story of Zacchaeus

Exodus 20: 1-21...Ten Commandments

1John 4: 7-11, 16...We Must Love One Another

John 15: 16, Matthew 5:3-12 & Acts 2
Jesus Gives Us the Holy Spirit

Luke 6: 17-19 & Matthew 5: 3-12
The Beatitudes



Do you know what these words mean?

absolution act of contrition baptism

God's life in me = grace confess(ion)

holiness peace sorrow pardon

penance reconciliation sin

sacraments eucharist repent

examination of conscience mercy

Holy Spirit disciples forgiveness

Ten Commandments

