

Prayer Service for Presenting the Catechist's Companion to the National Directory for Catechesis

Kelley L. Renz, M.A.

Opening prayer:

Leader: Almighty God, Teacher of all, look upon us as we come before You, eager to spread Your word, thirsty for Your truth, willing to answer Your call to teach. Help us to know Your Spirit is within us. Help us to open our minds, our hearts, our souls to Your guidance. Before You bless those to whom You will send us, bless us now, Lord ...

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created and You shalt renew the face of the earth.

Show your catechists a copy of the *National Directory for Catechesis*. Explain to them who wrote this directory and why. Ideally, provide each catechist with a copy of the NDC as well as a copy of Joseph White's *Catechist Companion to the National Directory for Catechesis*.

■ Allow 5-10 minutes for all to read the first section in the *Catechist's Companion*, "[What Is the NDC? A New Directory for a New Moment in Catechesis.](#)" Share your experience with the "catechetical world" and its development during the time of your education and ministry. If you are not old enough, invite someone from your parish who has good memories of the pre-Vatican II era and the profound influence on the Church that this council and its ensuing catechetical direction had and are still having. (Be sure that the person whom you choose shares with enthusiasm and integrity to doctrine).

Share **Questions for Reflection.**

Pray together the **Prayer for Catechists.**

Encourage catechists to use these prayers over and over as they grow in their spirituality and their teaching.

Read all about it!

Point out the resources listed and explain what each document is and how the catechist can find this material. Many of these documents are online. Others can be found at the diocesan library/bookstore/resource center.

■ Read together the next section in the *Catechist's Companion*: "[Catechesis and American Culture.](#)"

Pause after each characteristic of our culture and invite reflection. Be sure to emphasize "Catechesis in a Multicultural Church," and the impact demographics have had on your ministry.

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■ **Preparation:** Place four votive candles on a center table, in a circle, with a standing crucifix or statue of Christ as part of the circle. As each stage of evangelization is shared in this next section of the *Catechist Companion*, ask a catechist to light one of the candles.

Point out that God calls us to be aware of the culture in which we live. We do this even as laypersons who are not called to catechetical ministry. This awareness helps us to bear effective witness to our commitment to live as Christians in our places of work, in our homes, and in our social relations.

As catechists, we must be aware of many things and one of these, the NDC urges, is the *stages of evangelization*. As we share this next section together, let us light a candle for those at each stage who will be affected by our ministry.

Here is a prayer to be prayed together after reading each stage and lighting each candle: **Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful!**

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■ Read together the **Questions for Reflection** for the next

section, "[The Ministry of Catechesis](#)," before reading the section. Ask your catechists to propose what might be the six tasks of catechesis. Point out that each one corresponds to an aspect of faith in Jesus:

- We know
- We celebrate (liturgy)
- We act/behave (morality)
- We pray
- We live in community
- We reach out in community (mission)

Give your catechists 5-10 minutes to absorb this section and then discuss the questions once again.

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■Share the next section together. Put your catechists at ease, especially the newer ones, by letting them know that "methodology" is just a big word for *how* you teach. Methodology will differ depending on your audience. Before reading "[Catechetical Methodology](#)" together, ask your catechists to reflect on how they were taught in elementary school, high school, or perhaps college. Ask them to think about how they were taught at work. What methods were used? Did they get to use their hands a lot? Did they have to read a lot? Did they have to listen most of the time, or did they get to watch things, observe things, or listen to things?

After several moments, read the section together.

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If you have not done so, **break** with your catechists. Share a meal/snack together and have them think about the persons to whom they are called to catechize. What are their ages? What are their backgrounds in the faith? Why will they be coming to catechesis?

■Before asking your catechists to read "[The Recipients of Catechesis](#)," ask them to reflect on their degree of openness to the faith in these stages of their lives: preschool, elementary, adolescence, adult. Read each part of this section aloud, pausing in between for comment/reflection.

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■Imagine the feelings and thoughts of a parishioner who comes to you for catechesis and finds that you do not have accommodations for him/her... It can be heartbreaking. The bishops advise us to be prepared. Give your catechists 5-10 minutes to read "[Special Needs and Circumstances](#)." Be sure to see the end of this section on p. 13.

Share **Questions for Reflection**. Spend extra time with your catechists on this topic.

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Assure your catechists that you will be with them to meet all the needs of the students/adults who come to them for catechesis. Remind them that the diocesan office is prepared to assist them as well.

■**Preparation:** Have a Bible on the center table open to Mark 1:12. Have a votive candle for each catechist around the Bible. Ask a well-seasoned catechist to speak to the group about the place of prayer in her vocation as a catechist.

Pick up the Bible and read Mark 1:12.

Ask your catechists what Jesus did before He began His ministry. He prayed. We know He prayed often. We must imitate His example.

Give 10 minutes for your catechists to read over "[Nurturing Your Spirituality as a Catechist](#)." Invite a speaker to address your catechists.

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■Turn on a television. Turn on a radio. Turn on a computer. Pile several books on a table. Add two or three magazines. Toss a newspaper on the pile. We are media saturated. Those we teach are often more

savvy with this technology than are we. This cannot be, if we are to catechize effectively to them.

Read together “Catechesis in the Media Age.” Share the **Questions for Reflection** together. Then, gather your catechists around a computer and visit each website listed on p. 15. Be prepared to show them useful and interesting pages on each site, and suggest ways for them to use these sites in their preparation and actual classes.

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Closing Prayer:

The Veni Creator

Come, Spirit Creator,
come live in our minds
and fill our hearts which you have made,
with perfect grace.

We know you as the Paraclete
the gift of God most high,
our fire, our love, the living fountain
and holy anointing of our lives.

With seven gifts you act as
the finger of the Father’s right hand;
you are his promised One,
teaching us heavenly speech and
understanding.

Kindle us with fire brought from above,
pour love into our hearts,
and give strength
to our weakness of body.

Drive Satan far away from us,
and give us lasting peace
so that, led by your guidance,
no harm will come to us.

Let us know the Father, through you.
Let us know the Son, through you.
Let us believe forever that you are
the Spirit proceeding from
the Father and the Son.

Glory to the Father,
and glory to his Son,
who rose from death;
and glory to you, kind Strengthener,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

(Taken from *Catholic Family Prayer Book*, edited by
Jacquelyn Lindsey, Our Sunday Visitor)