

12 Quick Tips for Catechists

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1: Connect with other catechists. Ours is never a lone-ranger ministry. There is such a wealth of support in this interdependence. Pray together; share successes and ideas.

2: Our ministry isn't just to those who "sit" before us. It's to all their families. How do we encourage and strengthen the holiness of the family that is already there?

3: It's not about teaching; it's about learning. All we do must be centered on the needs and participation of the learners. If we as catechists are doing all the work, there is probably not much learning going on.

4: Books don't teach; people teach. It's the witness of our faith—our everyday experiences of God in our life—that makes faith real for those with whom we share faith. Don't try to sound like a holy card; be yourself. That's where God is.

5: Always address the "so what?" question. The tradition, doctrines, scripture and heritage we possess sit in a vacuum if they are not connected with life. What difference will it make when a 12-year old leaves our session and returns home? What does faith have to do with life when the businessman is at work this week? This is the key component of our catechetical sessions; without it we aren't doing catechesis.

6: Be inclusive. People learn in different ways. Are we appealing to all the senses, the various multiple intelligences? Are we using various techniques and methods and respecting diverse learning styles?

7: As we plan, as we pray, as we meet in our catechetical sessions, keep in the forefront that the primary goal of catechesis is to bring people into communion with Jesus Christ as disciples. Do we spend more time handing down a "school of thought" *about* Jesus than in nurturing an intimate personal friendship with him?

8: Always take time to pray—and use the rich variety of our Church's prayer.

9: Encourage creative, personal responses rather than relying only on worksheets and handouts.

Remember, today's learners "were born surrounded by technology." They will be creative with digital tools – encourage them!

10: Push them to be disciples. Connect with the Gospel challenge and Catholic social teaching. Look for ways to use social media tools - calling them to be "Digital Disciples" - to communicate the Gospel and to involve others in justice issues.

11: It is a proven fact that people learn more when they are enjoying themselves than in a strict, boring atmosphere. Today's youngsters learn differently. "Today's youth thrive on multimedia, multitasking, social environment for every aspect of their lives..." (*Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration*) Be creative with the wonderful digital tools that they are so comfortable with.

12: Put it in God's hands. In the words of Fr. Mychal Judge, OFM (chaplain, New York Fire Department, 2001): "Lord, take me where you want me to go; let me meet who you want me to meet; tell me what you want me to say, and keep me out of your way."