

where faith is formed
exploring the settings for catechesis

Chicago/Joliet

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Overview of Our Day

Flow: Input & Conversations

- Prayer
- Landscape for Catechesis in Today's Church
- Catechesis – Curriculum in the Big Picture
- Intentionally Incorporating the Four Settings
 1. Setting: Parish
 2. Setting: Family
 3. Setting: Age Specific
 4. Setting: Individual
 5. A few Curriculum Pointers

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As the flame of faith is carried,
as the torch of faith is passed,
Reaching 'cross the generations,
each receiving from the last,
So the promise to God's people is received,
then handed down,
In the light of our baptism,
through our fam'lies, faith is found.

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As the seasons spin and follow,
as our stories long endure,
Like an ever-flowing river,
so the covenant is pure.
In our span of earthly living,
as the great or as the least,
Still we find in book and table
Christ the Word and Christ the Feast

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May we learn to tell the story,
keep the flame of faith ablaze;
May we strive to keep the Gospel as the
center of our days
As we keep the faithful Spirit brightly
burning, lifted high,
May each generation follow with Christ's
light to journey by.

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Landscape for Catechesis in Today's Church

[NOTE: See handout p. 3]

- **Tension, defined:**
 1. the act of stretching or straining
 2. the state of being stretched or strained
 3. mental or emotional strain;
intense suppressed suspense,
anxiety, or excitement(Actually the state of being alive!!)

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The tensions include:

1. Systematic catechesis ↔ lifelong faith formation
2. Developmental needs ↔ intergenerational catechesis
3. Age specific = classroom, schooling ↔ diversity of catechetical models
4. Church documents ↔ church praxis
Example: Adult catechesis "adult catechesis as the organizing principle..."

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The tensions include...

5. Organic ↔ intentional
6. Communal ↔ individual
7. Home ↔ parish
8. Whole Community ↔ catechesis as one department

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The tensions include...

9. Diversity ↔ Sameness

"Ecclesial Integration"

10.



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Tensions...

- *Tensions aren't problems to be solved, but opportunities for learning, for growth, for being honest and real about catechesis today.*

Remembering: intimate communion and relationship with Jesus Christ!

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- "What if we all were more consistent? What if we all had wider loyalties? What if we were slower to dismiss others ideas? What if we took seriously the biblical idea that God's revelation comes mostly in what is strange and foreign to us? What if we all took to heart the idea that a little learning is a dangerous thing, that a little ideology is more dangerous still, and that other peoples passion for truth might be just as real as our own?"

R.Rolheiser Jan.13/08

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Catechesis – The Big Picture

How have you learned and grown in your faith? For example, through reading a book? Taking a course? Attending liturgy? Going to a Catholic school? Think of ALL the ways that have helped you to learn about your faith.

Write ONE way per post it note the various ways you have learnt about your faith.

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The Six Tasks of Catechesis (GDC)

1. Promoting knowledge of the faith
 - Introducing people to knowledge of Tradition and Scripture
 - Supporting them through a gradual process of understanding and deepening
2. Liturgical catechesis
 - Providing knowledge of the meaning of liturgy and the sacraments
 - Educating people for prayer and the meaning of the creeds
 - Bringing people to full, active participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist

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The Six Tasks of Catechesis (GDC)

3. Moral formation
 - Transmitting the attitudes of Jesus Christ so the faithful can walk in his footsteps
 - Including the Sermon on the Mount as a point of reference for moral life
4. Teaching to pray
 - Helping people learn to pray with Jesus
 - Letting them experience the *Our Father* as the model of Christian prayer

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The Six Tasks of Catechesis (GDC)

5. Education for Community Life
 - Following the teaching of Christ on community
 - Apprenticing people for the Christian life
6. Missionary initiation
 - Equipping people to bring their Christian identity into society through professional, cultural and social lives
 - Inviting people to share in evangelizing efforts

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 (#85-86, *General Directory for Catechesis*)

Where Faith is Formed...

- “Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it, and communicates it in many ways.” (GDC 105)
- Our community includes 4 central settings...

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TASK	Parish/ Igen	Family	Age Specific	Individual/ Wider
Knowledge of the faith				
Liturgical Education				
Moral Formation				
Prayer				
Community Life				
Missionary Initiation				

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What Do We Notice?

- What does this activity tell us about how people learn about their faith?
- What do you notice about what is there, what do you notice about what is missing?
- When you think about the catechetical offerings of your parish, and what was just shared, what surfaces for you as points of affirmation and points of challenge/tension?

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

(See handouts p.6)

“The effectiveness of catechesis depends to a great extent on the vitality of the Christian community in which it is given.”
(*NDC* p.100)

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

- “In giving attention to the individual, it should not be overlooked that the recipient of catechesis is the whole Christian community and every person in it. If indeed it is from the whole life of the Church that catechesis draws its legitimacy and energy, it is also true that ‘her inner growth and correspondence with God’s plan depend essentially on catechesis.’” (*GDC* 168)

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

- Catechesis for adolescents “promotes family faith development through parish and school programs by providing parent education programs and resources, incorporating a family perspective in catechetical programming, and providing parent-adolescent and intergenerational catechetical programming.” (*NDC* p.202)

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Intergenerational Template

1. Registration and Hospitality
2. Program Overview
3. Group Formation/Warm Up
4. Opening Prayer
5. All Ages Learning Experience
6. In-depth Learning Experience
7. Whole Group Sharing
8. Personal and/or Household Reflection
9. Home Application
10. Closing Prayer

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

Learning that involves everyone, NO ONE is passive...

1. Use Symbols

Be bold...simple but large enough to attract attention.

Introduce and explore these symbols in the All-Ages Learning Experience, and invite reflection and conversation. What do you think the symbols mean? How might they be connected to the learning we are sharing? What do the symbols remind you of—story, life experience, and so on?

EXAMPLE: BOWL OF WATER

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

2. Use Drama

First person. Bring to personally appear and share the saga of their writing experience...the audience that each was writing to...the central focus of the Good News that they wanted people to hear.

Contemporize Scripture in today’s context

Choral readings....variety of voices, such as the well known reading from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, the Psalms, and many of the wisdom poetic readings.

Narrator and other character voices. One person narrates the details in a scripture passage while others are assigned the spoken lines.

Consider creating an intergenerational drama team

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

3. Integrate Faith Sharing

An elderly parishioner shared her story of being part of the parish community for over seventy years. She spoke of the changes she had seen in the parish community and the impact of those changes had on the community's life. Young and old gave their full attention to the story.

- Select your speakers with care...
- Invite presenters who represent the diversity of your parish
- Provide an outline of what you want the person to share about...
- Provide a minimum and maximum length of time for the sharing.
- Have the person practice his or her story using the sound system, checking for sound quality...
- Listen to the presentation ahead of time to ensure that it will resonate well with an intergenerational community...
- Make sure that the theology of the story is in sync with church teachings and the focus of your learning session...

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

4. Remember the Power of Stories

- **Scripture stories, children's stories, personal stories.**

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

5. Technology/Media (Holy Cross Family Ministries)

6. Combine Learning with Prayer (Stations of the Cross, Lenten Litany)

7. Chaos Learning (Scripture Stations)

8. Oral Tradition (Re-telling bible stories)

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Good INTERGENERATIONAL Learning

9. Building a Craft (Advent wreath, wind sock)

10. Handouts (Marriage "House", CSI)

11. Creative Conversations (Dice, cards)

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Favorite Intergenerational Methods

12. Moral Dilemmas

13. Games (Lenten feud, Bible Millionaire, Cranium) See M. Theisen, St. Mary's Press

14. Convince Me! (Topical debates)

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

What makes the intergenerational "dance" work (EVALUATION)...

1. Variety – learning format, activities
2. Timing – ebb and flow
3. Team Leadership—can I see myself?
4. Open to the Spirit – whose program
5. Welcoming Environment - everywhere
6. Clarity of Goals – what, why, how

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

7. Passion and Commitment – of topic and of process
8. Good Facilitators – both large group and tale group
9. Know the Learners – accept yet challenge
10. Need to Engage all Learners – no one is standing back and watching

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

11. Meaningful Learning Experiences - LIFE
12. Good Materials/Resources
13. Age Appropriate Within Each Session
14. Integrated Prayer

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Setting: Parish/Intergenerational

Four Most Common Starting Points:

- Once a month intergenerational catechesis, forming the back bone for the parish's catechetical offerings.
- Three to four intergenerational faith festivals for key parish events.
- Sacramental preparation.
- Integrating intergenerational catechesis into already happening parish events –parish missions, VBS, parish festivals, and so on.

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TASK	Parish/ Igen	Family	Age Specific	Individual/ Wider
Knowledge of the faith				
Liturgical Education				
Moral Formation				
Prayer				
Community Life				
Missionary Initiation				

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Table Conversation

Conversation – Pick the question that fits your situation!

Intergenerational Practitioners: What have you learned through your practice of intergenerational learning, what's important?

What "tune-ups" might you need?

How does what you do INTERGENERATIONALLY relate to or have impact on the other 3 settings of catechesis?

Non-Practitioners: How could you be integrating the intergenerational setting as part of your catechetical plan?

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Intergenerational Resources

- **1. Generations of Faith Online** is a subscription website that exists to help parishes create lifelong systematic catechesis through intergenerational event centered learning. The site provides tools, processes, intergenerational programs, and home activities to make lifelong catechesis a reality in parishes.
- **2. People of Faith—HMHRP**

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Setting: Family

Why is the family setting important?

- “The Christian family is ordinarily the first experience of the Christian community and the primary environment for growth in faith. Because it is the “church of the home” (FC, no 11), the family provides a unique locus for catechesis. It is a place in which the word of God is received and from which it is extended.” “ (NDC 100-101)

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Setting: Family

- “While the catechesis offered within the family is ordinarily informal, unstructured and spontaneous, it is no less crucial for the development of the child’s faith.”... “In a certain sense nothing replaces family catechesis, especially for its positive and receptive environment, for the example of adults, and for its explicit experience and practice of the faith.” (GDC # 178, NDC p.203)

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Setting: Family

In their survey of the research literature, David Dollahite and Jennifer Thatcher found the following benefits of a family’s religious involvement:

- Divorce rates are lower (NOT non-existent!) and marital satisfaction and quality scores highest amongst religiously involved couples.
- Religious practices are linked with family satisfaction, closer father-child relationships, and closer parent-child relationships

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Setting: Family

- There is less domestic violence among more religious couples, and religious parents are less likely to abuse or yell at their children.
- Religious involvement promotes involved and responsible fathering and is associated with more involved mothering.
- Greater religiosity in parents and youth is associated with a variety of protective factors for adolescents. Adolescent religiosity is inversely related with many high-risk behaviors, all of which have potential to greatly influence the adolescents’ current and future family relationships.

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Setting: Family

Best Practices for the Family Setting

- Family Faith Conversations
- Family Devotions and Prayer
- Family Service
- Family Rituals and Traditions
- Family Meals

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As we implement family faith formation, we need to remember:

- Nurturing the faith practices of the home church is NOT just about doing family catechesis. It is seeing EVERY point of contact with families as an opportunity to listen, to support, and to resource them so that they can be who they are: church.
- In gathered programs and offerings consider the three fold process of :
 - Show
 - Practice
 - Reflect and take home

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Setting: Family

- Parishes are not doing FOR families but doing with.
- When we think catechist formation, we need to include parents as catechists and continually be asking ourselves, "How are we informing and forming parents to be transforming catechists?"
- Give households the resources they need to be faithful...

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Setting: Family

- Make discipleship the GOAL not the accidental by product of family faith formation.
- Identify how and where households most need parish support.
- When the family door opens, be ready to walk in.
- Ask the family question for EVERY parish offering.

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Setting: Family

The *GDC* and *NDC* both say that adult catechesis is to be the organizing principle for catechesis (*GDC* # 275, *NDC* p.188). Feed the adult –the parent – and watch what happens in the home!

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Setting: Family

Name the top five ways your parish currently is intentionally supporting the home church.

What "tune-ups" might your parish need to better serve the home church and engage the home in discipleship?

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Family Resources

1. Generations of Faith Online
2. People of Faith Magazines
3. RTJ's Family Poster

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Setting: Age-Specific

- Setting with which we are familiar
- Needs to be in collaboration with the other settings
- Bottom line: giving our parishioners an environment in which to encounter the Living God
- Weaving the four settings together means looking at different models for age-specific catechesis beyond the weekly classroom approach

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Setting: Age-Specific

- “The Church’s catechesis—and even more so, the catechist—must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way. From infancy through maturity, “catechesis is thus a permanent school of the faith and follows the major stages of life.” (NDC p. 187)

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Traits of Effective Age-Specific Catechesis

- engages them **experientially**—head, heart, and lifestyles
- respects and incorporates their **experience** in the learning activity
- provides an **environment** that is characterized by warmth, trust, acceptance, and inquiry
- incorporates a variety of **multi-sensory, image-rich** methods to engage the whole person

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Traits of Effective Age-Specific Catechesis

- incorporates methods that reflect the **multiple intelligences** of learners
- incorporates methods that respect the **learning styles** of learners
- utilizes **collaborative** and **group-centered** formats
- engages them in **construction, discovery, and exploration** of the topic or concept

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Traits of Effective Age-Specific Catechesis

- is **participative** and **interactive**
- engages them in **real-world learning** and **application**
- provides **hands-on participation** in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community – CHILDREN too!

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Traits of Effective Age-Specific Catechesis

- utilizes **milestones** as opportunities for faith formation

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There is no one best model for the entire church to be using for age specific catechesis. The MODEL for catechesis needs to take into consideration:

- leadership resources
- existing patterns in the community (when do people seem to have time? Are many people commuting to work so getting somewhere for evening programs is hard? And so on...)
- facility limitations (or giftedness!)
- the parish's plan to comprehensively cover the 6 tasks/diocesan curriculum guidelines
- diocesan resources, i.e. retreat centers, that can be used as part of the curriculum

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Setting: Age-Specific

Consider:

- Service Learning
- Monthly Gatherings
- Weekly Gatherings
- Small Faith Communities
- Courses and Workshops
- Summer week long offerings
- Retreats
- Simultaneous Offerings –Offering all the various age specific at the same time
- Sunday Morning Coffee Times

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Total Faith Development Process and Sacrament Preparation

Faith Formation Forum	Learning Model	Activity / Session	Dates, Times, Sessions	Location(s)
H-life Gatherings for all ages and generations	Intergenerational learning	Activity Centers or Paired Learning Home kits	Monthly Wed. 5:45-8:45pm Thurs. 5:45-8:45pm Friday 5:45-8:45pm	Church, FH, HR, MR
Holy Land Adventure Days	Intergenerational Learning	Activity Centers	Two Sunday afternoon events	Church, FH, HR, MR
Little Rock Scripture Study	Bible Study	Series of 10 sessions	Mondays (Sept.-Dec.)	FH, HR, MR
JustFaith	Sessions on Compassion and Justice	Series of 30 sessions retreats, and service	Tuesdays (Aug.-May)	HR
Into the Fields	Catechetical Formation	Series of 10 sessions	Weeknights or Saturday meetings	FH, HR
Spiritual Book Club	Discussion group	Related books	Monthly sessions – morning or evening	HR
Adults	Adult session	H-life topic of the month	First Friday Social after the 9:00am Liturgy	HR
Young Adults	Learning sessions	Discussion / faith sharing group	H-life Gatherings, Monthly Sunday afternoon	MR
TYM (ages 14-18+)	TYM sessions, social & service activities	Related topics	H-life Gatherings and Sundays, 6:30-8:30pm	FH, HR, MRs
TYM (ages 11-14)	TYM sessions, social & service activities	Related topics	H-life Gatherings and Sundays, 4:45-6:15pm	FH, HR, MRs
Children's FD	Sessions for children	Seasonal resources	H-life Gatherings, Sundays 9:40-10:40am in September and Lent	MRs
Pre-School FD	Sessions for children	Preschool resources	Sundays 8:30-9:30am 3x's month	MRs
Sacrament Prep (Baptism)	Parents, Godparents	workshop	Saturdays 8:30-12:00pm 6x's year	FH, HR, Church
Sacrament Prep (Reconciliation/Eucharist)	Child / Parent	On Our Way with Jesus	H-life Gatherings, monthly family sessions, home preparation	FH, HR, Church
Sacrament Prep (Confirmation)	Candidate Sessions (sometimes with sponsor)	workshop	H-life Gatherings, TYM, Confirmation II sessions	FH, HR, Church
RCIA for Adults & Children	RCIA for Adults & Children	Lectionary & related topics	Inquiry, Catechumenate, P & E, Mystagogy	PC
Landings	Adult	Selected topics	Modular Weekly sessions Thursdays 7:15-8:45pm	HR

TYM (ages 14-18+)	TYM sessions, social & service activities	Related topics	H-life Gatherings, Sundays, 6:30-8:30pm	
TYM (ages 11-14)	TYM sessions, social & service activities	Related topics	H-life Gatherings and Sundays, 4:45-6:15pm	FH, HR, MRs
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Landings	Adult	Selected topics	Modular Weekly sessions Thursdays 7:15-8:45pm	HR

Key for Locations
 FH = Fellowship Hall HR = Hospitality room MR = Meeting room(s) PC = Hospitality room

Setting: Age-Specific

- What methods of age-specific faith formation do you currently employ beyond the schooling model?
- What new opportunities for doing age-specific catechesis do you find intriguing or energizing?

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Youth Ministry Resources

- **Youth Ministry Access** is a subscription website for adult and youth leaders in parishes and schools. Providing detailed designs for gathered youth nights, extended events (including retreats), non-gathered strategies, and online training for leaders, Youth Ministry Access is the Catholic resource you need!!

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Setting: Individual/Wider Community

- "Adult catechesis requires a comprehensive, multifaceted, and coordinated approach and a variety of learning activities, such as participation in liturgical experiences, Scripture reading and study, retreats and experiences of prayer, family or home-centered activities, ecumenical dialogue, small-group experiences, large-group experiences, and individual activities." (*NDC* p.192)
- Catechesis with adolescents "incorporates a variety of program approaches, including parish and school programs; small-group programs; home-based programs, activities, and resources; one-on-one and mentoring programs; and independent or self-directed programs or activities." (*NDC* p.203)

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Best Practices for Individual Learners

1. The learning agenda connects to real life—to one's motives and interests.
2. Times of transition and change provide opportunities for faith formation.
3. It's important to focus on spiritual growth. "Tradition" is a lens for seeing one's life.

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Best Practices for Individual Learners

4. Individual learning should be guided by stated learning goals.
5. A variety of learning methods should be used to respect the diversity of learning styles.

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What Might It Include?

- Reading – book-of-the-month offerings, Scripture reading plans
- Magazines
- Podcasts/audio learning
- Video Options
- Online Courses (C21, Generations of Faith Online)
- Online Learning Centers (www.BustedHalo.com)
- Attending diocesan-sponsored events and local college offerings

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Knowledge of the faith				
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Setting: Individual/Wider Community

- What would you say are the top five ways or strategies you employ to resource individuals in learning?
- What is something you've wondered about doing but haven't done yet?

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Weaving the Four Settings into a Curriculum Plan

WHAT IS YOUR STARTING POINT? WHICH SETTING WILL GUIDE YOUR CREATION OF CURRICULUM??

Balancing the Intergenerational & Age Specific Curriculum

A. Know your guiding principle before reviewing the curriculum charts (which need to be double checked with diocesan guidelines before using as a tool)

Challenge: event-centered learning is one way to organize a parish's "whole community" curriculum plan.

B. Start with the event-centered framework, then move out to other topical/guideline-based learning expectations.

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Weaving the Four Settings into a Curriculum Plan

Potential Process:

- Fashion a parish-wide curriculum
 - Carried out through intergenerational and/or age-specific (along with family and individual)
 - Creating a six-year plan (what will the event-centered curriculum include? What will other curricula include?)
- Identify the age-specific catechetical needs AND the other age-specific programs which need to continue
- Create a comprehensive six-year plan
 - Recommendation: wall-size chart and post-it notes (write content areas and age-specific needs on post-it notes, place in appropriate setting for each year; see worksheet)

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Closing

- GDC # 140 : the pedagogy of Jesus:

May we be catechists , like Christ, who...

Receive others, especially the poor, the little ones and sinners, as persons loved and sought out by God;

Share the undiluted proclamation of the Kingdom of God as the good news of the truth and of the consolation of the Father;

Witness to a delicate and strong love which liberates from evil and promotes life;

Offer pressing invitations to a manner of living sustained by faith in God, by hope in the Kingdom and by charity to one's neighbour....AMEN!

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