Six Dimensions for Adult Faith Formation Content

Scripture and tradition form the core content of all adult catechesis, for the Church has always considered them the "supreme rule of faith." Through them we receive "the very word of God," and in them resounds "the voice of the Holy Spirit." (General Directory for Catechesis- GDC, 127) Sacred Scripture provides the starting point for reflecting on the faith, while the Catechism of the Catholic Church serves as the "reference for the authentic presentation of the content of the faith." (GDC, 120)

The Catholic faith is like a symphony in which the unity of faith finds expression in richly diverse formulations and manifestations. (GDC, 136) As the General Directory for Catechesis states: "The maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, missionary spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development." (Paragraph 87)

The ongoing development of a living, explicit, and fruitful Christian faith in adulthood requires growth in all six dimensions. Each of them is a fundamental aspect of Christian life and a foundational content area for adult faith formation.

1) Knowledge of the Faith

(See the CCC, 1691-2557; GDC 84-85, 87)

✓ Recognize communion with Jesus Christ as the definitive aim of all catechesis.
✓ Explore the Scriptures so that adults may be hearers and doers of the Word.
✓ Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines) and their place in the hierarchy of truths—for example, "the mystery of God and the Trinity, Christ, the Church, the sacraments, human life and ethical principles, eschatological realities, and other contemporary themes in religion and morality." (ACCC, 43)
✓ Study the Church’s teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect-life teaching.
✓ Learn the richness of the Church’s tradition, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of church history.
✓ Develop the philosophical and theological foundations of the faith and appreciate expressions of Christian thought and culture.
✓ Learn the meaning and practical relevance of current church teachings as presented by the pope, diocesan bishop, Vatican congregations, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
2) Liturgical Life  
(See the CCC 1066-1690; GDC 84-85, 87)  
✓ Understand, live, and bear witness to the paschal mystery, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church.  
✓ Learn and embrace in one’s life church doctrine on the Eucharist and the other sacraments.  
✓ Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, especially the Eucharistic liturgy.  
✓ Value the dignity of the baptismal priesthood and of the ordained priesthood and their respective roles in liturgical celebration and Christian mission.  
✓ Appreciate and appropriately participate in the Church’s daily prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the psalms, "an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church." (CCC, 2597)

3) Moral Formation  
(See the CCC 1691-2557; GDC 84-85, 87)  
✓ Understand how the "entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the ‘new commandment’ of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us," (CCC, 1970) and promote each disciple's formation in the life of the risen Christ.  
✓ Study the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings, and live in accord with them.  
✓ Appreciate the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of the human person, together with the reality of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it.  
✓ Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience in personal and social life, clarifying current religious and moral questions in the light of faith, and cultivating a Christian discernment of the ethical implications of developments in the socio-cultural order.  
✓ Recognize, defend, and live by the truth of objective moral norms as taught by the Church's magisterium in its moral and social teaching.  
✓ Promote a thorough catechesis on the Gospel of life so that respect for life from conception until natural death is honored in personal behavior, in public policy, and in the expressed values and attitudes of our society.  
✓ Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values of holiness, simplicity, and compassion.

4) Prayer  
(See the CCC 2558-2865; GDC 84-85, 87)  
✓ Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer, with special attention to "the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model of all Christian prayer." (GDC, 85)  
✓ Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic ascetical-mystical tradition as it has taken form across the centuries in diverse historical and cultural settings.
Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

Engage in shared prayer with others, especially family prayer, as well as at parish meetings and in small communities of faith.

Recognize and encourage practices of popular piety and devotion that help believers express and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ.

5) Communal Life

(See the GDC 84, 86-87)

Pursue personal and spiritual growth in human and Christian maturity.

Cultivate the human values and Christian virtues that foster growth in interpersonal relationships and in civic responsibility.

Nurture marriage and family life to build up the Church of the home.

Share actively in the life and work of the parish, and foster the potential of small communities to deepen the faith and relationships of members, to strengthen the bonds of communion with the parish, and to serve the Church's mission in society.

Learn the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church, including an understanding of the Church's authority and structures and of the rights and responsibilities of the Christian faithful.

Support the ecumenical movement and promote the unity of God's people as a constitutive dimension of fidelity to the Gospel.

6) Missionary Spirit

(See the GDC 84, 86-87)

Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful as an integral element of their baptismal calling, of the Church's nature and mission, and of a Catholic way of life.

Respond to God's call whether as lay, ordained, or religious, and develop a personal apostolate in family, Church, and society.

Motivate and equip the faithful to speak to others about the Scriptures, the tradition and teachings of the Church, and one's own experience of faith.

Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teaching in personal, family, professional, cultural, and social life.

Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and working for the transformation of society through personal and social action.

Appreciate the value of interreligious dialogue and contacts, and promote the Church's mission ad gentes in the local and universal Church.

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