



□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS

THE MINISTRY OF CATECHESIS (Adapted from *Renewing the Vision*)

"Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the church's efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 4).

The ministry of catechesis helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community and increase their knowledge of the core content of the Catholic faith. The ministry of catechesis also helps young people enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and the sacred tradition and their application to life today, and live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives, especially through a life of prayer, justice and loving service. Genuine faith is a total response of the whole person - mind, heart and will. The ministry of catechesis fosters growth in Catholic faith in all three dimensions - trusting (heart), knowing and believing (mind), and doing (will). The goal should be to have all Catholic youth involved in some program of catechesis.

The ministry of catechesis with adolescents has several distinct features that give direction to catechetical programming. Specifically, catechesis with adolescents:

- Recognizes that faith development is lifelong and therefore provides developmentally appropriate content and processes around key themes of the Catholic faith that are responsive to the age-appropriate needs, interests and concerns of young and older adolescents.
- Teaches the core content of the Catholic faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church - the profession of faith, celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ and Christian prayer - in order to provide a solid foundation for continued growth in faith.
- Integrates knowledge of the Catholic faith with the development of practical skills for living the Catholic faith in today's world.
- Utilizes the life experience of adolescents, fostering a shared dialogue between the life of the adolescent - with its joys, struggles, questions, concerns and hopes - and the wisdom of the Catholic faith.



130.31 (Cont'd)

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- Engages adolescents in the learning process by incorporating a variety of learning methods and activities through which adolescents can explore and learn important religious concepts of the Scriptures and Catholic faith. A variety of learning approaches keeps interest alive among adolescents and responds to their different learning styles.
- Involves group participation in an environment that is characterized by warmth, trust, acceptance and care, so that young people can hear and respond to God's call. This fosters the freedom to search and question, to express one's own point of view and to respond in faith to that call.
- Provides for real-life application of learning by helping adolescents apply their learning to living more faithfully as Catholic adolescents - considering the next steps that they will take and the obstacles that they will face.
- Promotes family faith development through parish and school programs by providing parent-education programs and resources, by incorporating a family perspective in catechetical programming and by providing parent-adolescent and intergenerational catechetical programming.
- Recognizes and celebrates multicultural diversity by including stories, songs, dances, feasts, values, rituals, saints and heroes from the rich heritage of various cultures.
- Incorporates a variety of program approaches, including parish and school programs, small-group programs, activities, mentoring programs, and independent or self-directed programs or activities.
- Explicitly invites young people to explore the possibility of a personal call to ministry and the beauty of the total gift of self for the sake of the kingdom.

The ministry of catechesis most effectively promotes the faith development of young and older adolescents when the curriculum is focused on important faith themes drawn from the teachings of the church and on the developmental needs and life experiences of adolescents.