

# Top 10 reasons why you should be a catechist

It will help your faith come alive and get you more active in parish life

By **Woodeene Koenig-Bricker**

**L**et's be honest. Agreeing to teach kids about the faith is a daunting prospect. Not only do you commit to being present every Wednesday night into eternity (OK, not quite that long), but you also have to deal with kids, and worse, their parents! On any given night, you might have Malcolm using the cross book-mark the class made as a sword, Amy's mother complaining that her child doesn't know what the Church teaches, and Kyle using his cell phone as you're trying to teach the Sermon on the Mount. Argh!

Of course, we can all think of reasons not to teach, but I have compiled a list of 10 reasons that every one should consider taking on the role of catechist.

## 10. The best way to learn is to teach.

We all are called to continue to grow in our own faith, and the best way to learn is to teach. When you instruct others, your own understanding increases. If your own faith education ended years ago, the resources and materials you are exposed to as a catechist will surely refresh and expand your own knowledge.

## 9. Catechists tell the truth.

In today's chaotic world, people are searching for what is real and what isn't. Catechists are like the little boy who told the emperor he wasn't wearing any clothes. Catechists speak the truth about God, faith and morals. The world needs the message of the Gospel and the way to true happiness; as a catechist, you offer a hungry world that sustenance.

## 8. Sharing the faith is an honor.

It's estimated that fewer than 1 percent of Catholics are catechists. If you've been approached to be a catechist, or if you feel the call, you are being asked to do something special for God, for the Church and for your fellow Catholics.

## 7. Your own faith will come alive.

By acting on what you believe, you become a participant in building up God's kingdom. After all, Jesus told us not to put our light under a bushel basket, and that means not hiding it behind a missalette either. As a catechist, you will discover that prayer, liturgy and your own relationship with God will become more vibrant and meaningful.

## 6. You become an active part of the most active part of your parish.

One criticism of Catholic churches is that they don't offer as much "fellowship" as some others. When you join the catechists in your parish, you enter into a community that will support you on your faith journey, pray for and with you and encourage you in your Catholic way of life.

## 5. A catechist is a role model.

Ask young people who their role models or heroes are, and you'll get a litany of movie and sports stars. While looking good and being athletic are fine qualities, young people also need examples of ordinary people who do the right thing just because it is the right thing. As a catechist, you get to model behaviors young people might not learn anywhere else.

## 4. You will be practicing stewardship.

In these difficult economic times, families are struggling with rising prices and shrinking incomes. Being a catechist is a way of being a good steward by giving a bit of your most precious resource — your time. You might not be able to donate as much money as you would like, but we all have time and talent to share.

## 3. You show your own family that you value religious education.

Taking time out of your life to teach the faith shows your own children, grandchildren, siblings and family members that you put a high priority on religious education. You may find you are teaching them as much by your example as you are your students by your lesson plan.

## 2. It's fun.

Spending time with energetic, enthusiastic young people gives you renewed energy and vitality. Kids remind adults to live and laugh in the moment and get enthused about things like holy days and stories of saints. Not to mention there's nothing like it when a kid "gets" one of the tenets of the faith, like the Real Presence.

## 1. It's what we are called to do.

At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus said: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:19-20). By teaching the next generation about the Good News, you are fulfilling your part of the Great Commandment. It may be the most important thing you will ever do.

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