Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.

Matthew 28:19
Here I am, Lord
Qualities of an Effective Catechist

A desire to grow in and share our faith
Knowledge and Skills of a Catechist

Honest and caring relationships with children
Lesson Planning

- Know the curriculum.
- Chart your course.
- Create a thumbnail lesson plan.
- Gather necessary materials.
- Request resources.
“I see and I forget. I hear and I remember. I do and I understand.”

Confucius

**THE CONE OF LEARNING**

After 2 weeks, we tend to remember...

- **Passive**
  - Reading: 10% of what we READ
  - Hearing Words: 20% of what we HEAR
  - Seeing: 30% of what we SEE

- **Active**
  - Watching a Movie
  - Looking at an Exhibit
  - Watching a Demonstration
  - Seeing it Done on Location: 50% of what we SEE & HEAR
  - Participating in a Discussion
  - Giving a Talk: 70% of what we SAY
  - Doing a Dramatic Presentation
  - Simulating the Real Experience
  - Doing the Real Thing: 90% of what we DO

Source: Edgar Dale (1969)
Technology

- Socrative.com
- polleverywhere.com
- Getkahoot.com
Lesson Reflection

- What went well in this lesson? Why?
- What problems did I experience? Why?
- Was it “student centered”? Should it have been?
- What could I have done differently?
- What did I learn from this experience that will help me in the future?
In many ways, catechesis is a lot like parenting. Although there are thousands of “how-to” books and articles filled with strategies and suggestions for being the best catechist ever, we often learn more through on-the-job training and trial and error.
What is classroom management?

Classroom management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behavior by students. The term also implies the prevention of disruptive behavior.
Set Boundaries

- Make a few rules, explain, and enforce them consistently.
Identify the Improper Behavior

- Boredom, seeking attention, trying to impress peers, emotional problem, family situation, inner conflict
Avoid interrupting your lesson

- A good catechist learns to deal with discipline problems without stopping the lesson
Keep students involved

- Keeping your students busy and on task right from the start, you eliminate a great deal of potential trouble
Avoid the following

- Never send a child out of the room alone and unsupervised
- Avoid being overly tough
- Be care not to use God as an enforcer
The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that: “Persons with disabilities...are integral members of the Christian community.

- All persons with disabilities have the capacity to proclaim the Gospel and to be living witnesses to its truth within the community of faith and offer valuable gifts. Their involvement enriches every aspect of Church life.

- They [persons with disabilities] are not just the recipients of catechesis—they are also its agents.
All persons with disabilities or special needs should be welcomed in the Church. Every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness.

Some persons with disabilities live in isolating conditions that make it difficult for them to participate in catechetical experiences. “Since provision of access to religious functions is a pastoral duty,” parishes should make that much more effort to include those who may feel excluded.

The Church’s pastoral response in such situations is to learn about the disability, offer support to the family, and welcome the child.” (NDC USCCB, Par. 49)
ACCESS AND INCLUSION MODEL
Parish Religious Education Programs
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Providing for an inclusive faith formation program is only limited by our imagination. These are suggested models of inclusion:

- **Integration with Accommodations**: The student participate in classroom with the support of a catechist assistant, peer tutor or therapeutic support staff (wrap-around).
- **Full Integration**: The student participates in the religious education classroom with peers.
- **Program Integration in Learning Support Classroom**: The student participates in small group learning support classroom using an adapted curriculum and materials.
- **Integration with Individualized Instruction**: The student participates in classroom opening prayer, program liturgies and special classroom activities. Student receives individualized instruction.

Parish liturgical celebrations and catechetical programs should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation according to their capacity.

A Framework of Access and Inclusion: Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities
A statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops 1999
Parents

- A formal getting to know you process or may be obtained from the parents on an informal basis.

- History: “History” refers to the story of the person’s life from birth to the present time.

- Who: “Who is Jeff?” on a list of adjectives that describe the person.

- Strengths: Places the focus on the strengths of the person you are getting to know.

- Dreams: Addresses the future. It puts the teacher in touch with the parent’s vision of the future for their child.

- Nightmares: Described as “Nightmares/Fears” helps the parent explore things they hope to avoid for their child.

- Needs: “Needs” is intended to elicit what is needed for the student to move closer to the dream, avoid the nightmare and.
1. What are your goals (dreams) for Jeff in religion class this year? What are the main things you want Jeff to learn this year?

2. What does Jeff like to do in his spare time?

3. Does Jeff have any special fears or needs that I need to be aware of?

4. Does Jeff have any food allergies?

5. When Jeff is upset, what does he do and what have you found to be the best way to help him calm down?

6. Would it be all right with you if I talk to Jeff’s school teachers to see if they have any helpful hints for me? NOTE: Ask for written permission.

7. Do you have any information on Down syndrome (or whatever the child’s disability is) that you think would be helpful for me to know?

8. In your opinion, what do you think is the best way to teach Jeff a new idea?

9. Can Jeff make his needs known? (this is important if the student is non-verbal.)

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about Jeff?
Planning Classes for Diverse Learners
Multiple Intelligences

- Nature Smart (Naturalist)
- People Smart (Interpersonal)
- Number Smart (Logical/Mathematical)
- Picture Smart (Spatial/Visual)
- Self Smart (Intrapersonal)
- Body Smart (Bodily-Kinesthetic)
- Music Smart (Musical)
- Word Smart (Linguistic)
To plan class lessons for a diverse group of learners:

- Note whether your activity is primarily visual, auditory or kinesthetic.

- Consider all the senses as you plan.

- Modify the plan for students who are visually or hearing impaired or who have a motor impairment.

- Break complex or abstract concepts into simple terms with smaller steps.

- After you design the plan, determine if anyone in the class would be left out and take steps to modify the plan if necessary.
General Techniques

- Believe that individual differences are normal, expected and acceptable.

- Appreciate the strengths and needs of each learner.

- Learn more about different learning styles.

- Plan multi-sensory experiences for every lesson.

- Reduce the use of language arts – listening/reading/writing – as a primary mode of sharing information. If writing is a difficulty, have a discussion with the child/student and you do the writing.

- Encourage student participation and involvement by providing a wide variety of activities.

- Plan small group activities in which students learn from their peers.
General Techniques

- Connect abstract concepts with concrete real-life examples and illustrations.

- Give students creative ways to assimilate new concepts through movement, drama, music, collages, photography, etc.

- Be flexible in offering teaching and classroom modifications.

- Accept different outcomes based on the needs of individual students.

- Give every student the opportunity to be successful to equalize the academic abilities.

- Maintain a safe learning environment in which one fears ridicule or embarrassment.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with ADD/ADHD

**For Beginning Activities**

- Give small amounts of work.
- Provide signals to begin.
- Use timers and encourage self-monitoring.
- Use verbal and written directions.
- Provide additional structure (e.g., large-lined paper).
- Highlight directions using larger fonts or colors.

**For Keeping On-Task**

- Increase frequency of positive reinforcement.
- Use peer assistants.
- Make tasks interesting.
- Break tasks into smaller, “manageable” units.
- Allow breaks.
- Use hands-on activities.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with ADD/ADHD

For Listening

Teach note taking and encourage use of notebook organizers. Use positive reinforcement. Allow doodling. Allow standing.

For Excessive Activity

Use activity as rewards (run errands, wash boards, move desks). Allow standing during class. Encourage active participation. Reward sitting.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with ADD/ADHD

- **For Impulsive Behavior**
  
  Provide acceptable alternatives.
  Encourage trying to continue with another part of the assignment before interrupting the teacher.
  Recommend not taking during lectures.
  Recommend writing down questions and answers before blurting out.
  Teach acceptable social behavior for conversations, for class behavior, and for interacting with peers.
  Reward listening and appropriate behaviors.

- **For Working Independently**

  Ensure tasks match ability levels.
  Provide brief directions.
  Use brief tasks.
  Use checklists for self-monitoring.
  Use positive reinforcement.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with ADD/ADHD

For Following Class Rules

- Keep rules simple.
- Post and review class rules.
- Model and role-play following rules.
- Be consistent with enforcement of rules.
- Provide students with copies of rules.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Challenging Behaviors

- Respond mildly to negative behavior with flat affect or selectively ignore inappropriate behavior that is unintentional or unlikely to reoccur
- Create opportunities to be successful, give responsibilities
- Reinforce positive behavior with frequent positive attention, genuine praise needs to be offered immediately
- Provide calming manipulatives for children who exhibit need for sensory input
- Provide constructive opportunities for movement (takes notes for another class, does a needed errand)
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Challenging Behaviors

- Agree in advance several alternative positions: standing at a desk, a desk in a less stimulating part of the room, working on floor
- Arrange with child in advance non-intrusive clues as reminders to remain on task.
- Proximity support: move to where the child is sitting or standing to talk with the child. Physical proximity helps focus.
- Hand gestures are helpful private forms of communication with a child. Agree to call on only when the child knows the answer.
- For some children, behavioral contracts are helpful agreed upon goals and means to measure progress.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Challenging Behaviors

- Tangible rewards are helpful reinforcements for positive behaviors. Involve children in selecting rewards.

- Provide relaxing atmosphere while working: music, dimming lights

- Adjust environment, seating arrangement for more helpful support

- Be sure to offer 8 positives to 1 negative comment

- Name the behavior that is preferred rather than reinforcing by stating the negative behavior
The individual may be absorbing more than s/he can relate back to you. Look for non-verbal clues, like a nod or shake of the head, an interest in what you’re saying, a smile. Assume competence.

Ask simple questions that can be answered yes or no.

Use pictures and objects that the individual can point out to indicate s/he understands.

Have the students draw a response or act it out.

Above all, don’t be discouraged by a seeming lack of response. Just your presence means a great deal, even if they can’t tell you.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Visual Impairments

- Appeal to all senses. Offer opportunities to touch, smell, taste, hear
- Have student identify their preferred format (braille, large print, fonts size)
- Describe and tactually familiarize the student to the classroom and surroundings
- Use descriptive works in relation to the student’s body orientation
- Describe in detail pertinent visual occurrences of the learning activity
- Encourage independence by creating safe environments
- Enhance learning by using tactile props for all to experience
- Create a desk border to hold materials for task
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Hearing Impairments

- If the student uses assistive listening devices and lip reads:
  - Have student sit closer to presenter
  - Always face the student when speaking
  - Speak slowly, naturally, clearly
  - Do not exaggerate your lip movement or shout
  - Do not block your mouth with your hand or a book
  - If needed, provide a note taker for the student.
Accommodation Ideas for Students with Hearing Impairments

- If the student uses an interpreter:
  - Speak directly to the student rather than to the interpreter
  - Provide the student and interpreter with outlines and written materials in advance
  - Use captioned DVD when possible
  - When writing is being done on the board, interpreter needs to stand near the writing so that the students can both see the writing and interpreter
  - If needed, provide a note taker for the student
  - Use visuals
  - Teach sign language vocabulary to the class to accompany the lesson
  - Create opportunity to “feel” music, sound
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum

- Be consistent. Have the same routine for greeting and proceeding in class. Post the schedule.

- Keep your language as simple as possible.

- Use concrete objects and pictures when possible.

- Provide social stories.

- Repeat ideas, but vary the manner in which they are presented.

- Some students may use sign language.

- Give recognition and praise for accomplishments whenever possible.

- Help the individual work with others whenever possible.

- Provide a quiet space if the individual becomes over-stimulated.
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum

*before class*

- **Welcome**
  - Your most important task is to be welcoming
  - Seek first to understand the learners in front of you.
  - Focus on the individual strengths
  - Meet with parents individually
  - Learn as much as possible about the students you will teach

- **Prepare**
  - Be well prepared
  - Do not allow for downtime
  - Provide structure and consistency
  - Actively engage the child
  - Make things predictable

- **Provide Structure**
  - Create a routine
  - Use visual schedules/reminders
  - Limit downtime
  - Classes should be no longer that one hour
  - Each hour should be divided into 5-, 10, or 15 minute individual and small group activities
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum
*during class*

**General**
- Create a positive environment
- Spend time developing rapport
- Use repetition of concepts in a variety of ways
- Involve as many modalities as possible
- Use music – play songs during seatwork
- Provide choices
- Connect material to personal interests
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum

*language*

- Use concrete language
- Always phrase comments in the positive
- Catch them “being good” and then praise them for it
- Give five affirmations for every one statement of corrective feedback
- Use behavior-specific praise
- Example: Instead of “Nice job!” Say, “I like the way you colored in the lines.”
- Don’t ask a question if it’s not a choice
  - Example: Instead of, “Do you want to sit down?” Say, “Please, sit.”
- Or offer two appropriate choices
  - Example: “Patrick, are you going to sit in this chair or this chair?”
- Name the behavior you want, not the behavior you don’t want.
  - Example: Instead of “Don’t run!” Say “walking feet” or “please walk nicely.”
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum

*transitions*

- Anticipate changes and transitions
  - Give a two minute reminder before transition
  - Signal transitions – use non-verbal signals for transitions in addition to verbal ones

- Give advance notice
  - “Two more minutes!”

- Transition signal
  - Ring bell

- Follow challenging transitions with rewarding activities
  - Snack after playground
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum

*sensory*

- Be aware of possible sensory issues
  - Room temp, florescent lighting, noise levels

- Allow for “processing time”

- Wait before repeating yourself

- Allow student to choose a “fidget”

- Create opportunities for movement

- Allow different types of seating, breaks

- When things get challenging, consider what you can do to change the environment, not the child
Accommodation Ideas for Students on the Autism Spectrum
*schedules*

- Use visual cues
- Develop pictures schedules
- Post schedule on chalkboard or poster board
- Picture or symbol of next activity
  - “If I can’t see it, you didn’t say it!”
11 Hints for Modifying an Existing Religious Education Class Lesson for Students with IDD
How could I present this concept if the person I am teaching cannot read and/or write?

- Hint #1 suggests that I look at every reading-writing activity (the most common activity in published curricula) and redesign it so that non-readers and non-writers can understand the ideas being presented. Sometimes this may mean you will need to put some children in a group and have the classroom aide or other volunteer read to the group. Other times you might use a video tape that presents the same concept in a more appealing way.
What adaptations to this project/activity can I make to allow a person with very poor fine motor skills to meaningfully participate?

- For example, if the activity involves cutting and pasting, can I provide pre-cut materials to be pasted? Do I need oversized scissors, adapted scissors, extra-large glue sticks, peer partners for the activity? Could pictures be torn rather than cut?

- Hint #2 addresses the challenges of students who have poor fine-motor skills. Students who cannot write, but have good verbal skills can respond to a concept by making an oral presentation to the class, or possibly recording their thoughts and ideas on tape or video to share with the class. Sometimes simply providing larger paper and bigger marking tools is all that is necessary.
What kind of experience can I create for the individual in order that he or she can personally relate to the concept/idea/theme?

- For example, in the baptism theme of welcome, introduce the concept of welcome through a role play involving unwelcome and rejection.

- Hint #3 deals with relevance and each class has its own flavor and personality. While one class may relate to a lesson on compassion through a clip from an evening news broadcast, yet another group of students would benefit from a trip to a shelter for homeless people. Students with intellectual/developmental disabilities learn most easily in true-to-life settings.
How can I represent this scripture story in language and visuals that will make sense to the person with IDD?

- For example, to teach the story of the boy Jesus in the temple, tell the students that Jesus knew he had an important job: he was a teacher. So he went to the temple to teach but he did not tell his parents where he was going. So, at first his parents were worried, then, they were angry. After telling the story, ask the students to role play the story. Use an illustrated Bible to help connect the role-play with the scriptures.

- Hint #4 requires the teacher to examine a scripture story looking for difficult vocabulary words that need to be simplified. It also asks the teacher to find pictures and/or objects that may simplify the meaning of the story. Having students dress as characters in a story can make it more real for the person with intellectual limitations.
If a student with intellectual / developmental disabilities is an auditory learner, how can I enhance a visual presentation by increasing the auditory input?

- Accompany a visual with an audio-taped explanation or possibly use music that relates to the theme content.

- Hint #5 encourages the teacher to add auditory input to a visual activity to help the person with intellectual/developmental disability who learns best through listening. In some cases it may mean associating a scripture story with a simple song with many repetitions in it. Sometimes only the chorus for a song may be appropriate.
If a text passage is to be read, what will make it meaningful to the visual learner?

- Use pictures, concrete objects or things described in the story, clothing, or scenery to set the stage.

- Hint #6 is another attempt to bring the scriptures alive for students. This can be done with flannel board stories, puppets, or inviting a story illustrator to class.
If a person with intellectual/developmental disability is a kinesthetic learner, what can be included for kinesthetic and sensory input?

- Use fragrances, fabrics, or clay for alternative materials or walk in the classroom to different locations in the story.

Hint #7 asks the teacher to develop activities involving the senses as much as possible. An example of this would be to bring fragrant oils to class for the student to touch and smell when reading the scripture passage about the woman bathing Jesus’ feet with oils and then drying them to show love and respect.
If your plan doesn’t work, what are at least two other possible alternative activities?

Hint #8 encourages a “back up” plan. If an activity is going poorly, what are some alternative ideas that could be tried? While classes go well with a predictable pattern such as opening and closing with a quiet prayer time, trying something completely different may really get the student’s attention.
Could this activity be done in a group with a meaningful role for the student who is academically challenged?

- Hint #9 looks for ways to involve the student who has intellectual/developmental disabilities. Oftentimes this student can be given a meaningful role as part of a group activity even if his or her understanding of the overall project is limited. The student with cognitive limitations may not be able to take a scripture story and decide what the important events in the story are, but once the figures or scenery are drawn or outlined, they may be able to add color or glue figures into place.
What can be done specifically to help the person with intellectual/developmental disabilities apply this lesson in their attempt to live out the gospel in their daily life?

- Hint #10 attempts to get the teacher to consider simplifying homework assignments for the student with intellectual limitations. For example, if the class assignment is to spend 15 minutes a day in quiet prayer, the person with IDD may be asked to “say an extra little prayer each day this week.” If the lesson is to ask forgiveness, the person with IDD may be encouraged to say she is sorry when she hurt someone’s feelings in class or at home.
If the person has slow cognitive development, what are the expectations that I have for this person?

- *Modifying your expectations for learning achievement may save you and the student a great deal of frustration.*

- Hint #11 is concerned with keeping your expectations within the realm of reality. Remember that these concepts of faith will be presented in a variety of ways throughout the person’s life. If they don’t quite “get it” now, chances are that they will later, if religious education continues.
† The Sign of the Cross †

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

AND OF THE SON

AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT


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Resources

- https://www.loyolapress.com/special-needs.htm
- www.ncpd.org
- www.thereligionsteacher.com
- Catechist Magazine
- Rose Kennedy Comprehensive Curriculum
- Archdiocese Education Resource Center
Closing Prayer