

TO: Priests, Deacons, Principals, DRE's, Pastoral Ministers

FROM: Bishop William S. Skylstad

RE: Children's Catechetical Textbook Recommendations

The catechetical ministry involves families, parish communities, and catechists in authentically presenting the teachings of Jesus and the Church and inviting people to respond as disciples according to their ability. Catechetical textbooks and manuals are important and helpful tools in the process of catechizing children. There is probably no single text series that is best for every parish or school program. However, a text series should be selected with specific criteria in mind. An important consideration in the selection process of catechetical texts is the work of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This committee supported by the staff at the Office for the Catechism at the USCCB invited publishers to submit catechetical texts to be reviewed with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A list of publishers that have been reviewed and found to be in the conformity with the Catechism has been published.

Besides this important consideration, the program should be sequenced to present essential truths in an understandable manner and correspond to the stage of the student's development. The process in the lessons should reflect good and various methodologies. "It must be a theological formation that is close to human experience and capable of correlating the various aspects of the Christian message with the concrete life of man..." (General Directory for Catechesis 241) The format should reflect cultural diversity and adequately present the church's teaching on social justice. The presentation of the Sacraments of Initiation should be included in texts as early as second grade to reinforce the Eucharist/Confirmation policy. The manual should give adequate assistance for the catechist and resources for family and parish.

The children's texts and manuals listed below are on the Catechism Committees' list of materials found to be in conformity with the Catechism. Some more than other materials listed follow the other guidelines listed above. It is with all this in mind that I recommend the following list of texts for use in your catechetical programs.

Publisher	Series
Benziger	Come Follow Me 1998 Share the Joy 1997 Christ Jesus, The Way 2002
Harcourt Religion Publishers	Walking By Faith 1999 Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation & Eucharist 2000 Level I & II 2002
*Ignatius Press	Images of God 1986-1993
Loyola Press	Christ Our Life 1997/2000 Parish M 1999 Knowing Our Catholic Faith: Beliefs & Traditions 2000
Resources for Christian Living	Faith First 2000, 2001 Our Catholic Identity 1998
William H. Sadlier, Inc.	Coming to Faith 1998 & 1999 Sacrament Program: First Reconciliation & Eucharist 2000
Silver Burdette Ginn	Blessed Are We 2002 The Gift of Eucharist 2000 The Gift of Reconciliation 2000 This Is Our Faith 1998

*Though Ignatius Press is on the Catechism Committee's list of materials found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, some of the other tenets of the guidelines are found to be weak. A catechist must be skilled in catechetical methodology and theology to use this series as a basis for forming the faith of children.

The following Family Life Programs are also found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and are recommended.

Publisher	Series
Benziger	Benziger Family Life 2001
Harcourt Religion Publishers	Growing In Love 2001
Leaflet Missal Company	Project Genesis 1997

The following publishers are lectionary based, preschool, or sacramental materials that are not found on the Catechism Committee's list because they have not been submitted or may currently be in the process of review. These materials are currently used in some parishes.

Hi Time Pflaum
Living the Good News
Ligouri Publishing
Our Sunday Visitor
Resource Publication