

# INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION CURRICULUM

“Catholic schools are vital to the Church’s mission of evangelization and catechesis. They exist in order to educate the whole person: mind, body, and soul. They present the totality of the Catholic faith. Whether Catholic schools are part of a parish structure or are regional, diocesan, or private, growth in the Catholic faith for the children and young people who attend them is essential to their identity and purpose.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Chapter 9, 4b, page 262.)

“The Catholic school should strive to integrate the Catholic faith into every aspect of its life. ...the Catholic school should have a clearly defined religion curriculum with specific goals and objectives. The Catholic school ‘must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge.’” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Chapter 9, 4b, page 262-263.)

The Religion Curriculum of the Diocese of Cleveland is centered around four Strands. These Strands are: Message, Worship, Community, and Service. They are the organizing framework for each grade of the curriculum. They assure that all major categories of knowledge, skills, and values are included. They provide unity, continuity, coherence and emphasis. The Essential Questions, Content and Skills are developed under each of the Strands and identify what the learner will know, understand, and value in living out their Catholic faith. Throughout the document, references are made to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

## STRAND ONE – MESSAGE

“The Christian message concentrates on the person of Jesus Christ. Above all, catechesis must transmit this centrality of Christ in the Gospel message. Catechesis that is centered on Christ presents Christ first and presents everything else with reference to him,<sup>2</sup> for he is the center of the Gospel message.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Pages 75-76.)

Through a Christ centered message, students will come to know that God is our Father and the Creator of all things. God is good, kind and loving, and blesses us with many gifts. God sent His Son, Jesus, to teach us to love. Jesus is both human and divine. He is our Savior, Friend, Teacher and Brother. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to give love and strength to all of us. The Spirit helps us to live out our lives following Jesus’ two great Commandments.

## STRAND TWO – WORSHIP

“In the Church’s mission of evangelization, catechesis and Liturgy are intimately connected. ‘Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity.’<sup>3</sup> Catechesis and Liturgy originate in the faith of the Church; they proclaim the Gospel; they call its hearers to conversion to Christ; they initiate believers into the life of Christ and his Church; and they look for the coming of the kingdom in its fullness when ‘God may be all in all.’<sup>4</sup> ‘The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.’<sup>5</sup> The history of salvation, from the creation of the world to its redemption and eschatological fulfillment in Jesus Christ, is celebrated in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. That is why the Liturgy is ‘the privileged place for catechizing the People of God.’<sup>6</sup>” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 110.)

Through catechesis and Liturgy, students will come to know God more fully in the three persons of the Trinity, with Jesus as God’s greatest gift to us and the Holy Spirit as guide for us in the Church. They will become familiar with Gospel stories, Mary and the saints. Scripture shows how each life experience is a unique expression of God’s presence and loving care for them. Students will become more aware of the sacraments, especially of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

1 GDC, no. 73.

2 Cf. CT, no. 6.

3 CT, no. 23.

4 1 Cor 15:28.

5 SC, no. 10; cf. CCC, no. 1069.

6 CCC, no. 1074.

# INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION CURRICULUM CONTINUED

## STRAND THREE – CHURCH AS COMMUNITY

“The Church is one. She is one because the source of her unity is the Trinity of Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. She is one because her founder, Jesus Christ, reconciled all persons to the Father through the sacrifice of the cross. She is one because the Holy Spirit gathers the faithful into communion and joins them in the Body of Christ. Charity is the fundamental bond of the Church’s unity that is expressed in the profession of one faith received from the apostles, the common celebration of the sacraments, and apostolic succession. This one Church is characterized by a great diversity that comes from the variety of God’s gifts given to the Church and the diversity of those who receive them. This diversity, however, does not detract from the Church’s essential unity. Rather, it is a dimension of her catholicity.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 210.)

Church is a gathering of God’s people who listen to God’s stories and Holy Words, participate in celebration, receive the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist and offer thanks. We become members of this community through Baptism. Children use experiences of family relationships to begin to understand the larger faith family, the church as God’s family. God made each family unique. We are all equal yet different.

## STRAND FOUR – SERVICE

“The call to work for social justice is imbedded in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, who came “to bring good tidings to the poor/... liberty to captives/ and recovery of sight to the blind.”<sup>7</sup> That call has been further specified by the official teachings of the Church. The Church’s social teaching comprises a body of doctrine, but it is not merely a series of documents. Rather, it is a living tradition of thought and action. ...”

“The Church’s social doctrine is part of a systematic moral framework that includes the totality of Christ’s moral teachings and those proposed by the Church in his name. The Church’s social teachings are deeply integrated in her comprehensive vision of Christian morality. They cannot be treated as if they were peripheral or optional. ...”

“The Church’s social teaching seeks to apply the Gospel command of love to and within social systems, structures, and institutions. It ‘proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action.’<sup>8</sup> We bishops have articulated seven key themes that form the heart of Catholic social teaching: (1) life and dignity of the human person; (2) call to family, community, and participation; (3) rights and responsibilities; (4) the option for the poor and vulnerable; (5) the dignity of work and the rights of workers; (6) solidarity; and (7) care for God’s creation.”<sup>9</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 170-171.)

Loving God means caring for and showing responsibility to family, friends, parish and world communities. The students will learn and practice the skills of respect, kindness, manners and inclusiveness of friends, family and local communities. The terms justice and peace will be examined and related to family and school examples. Students will come to see personal responsibility as sharing the mission and ministry of Jesus. Students will understand how personal development is important in the role of discipleship. Finally, students will learn to model Jesus by living a life of service to the Church and the community.



<sup>7</sup> Lk 4:18.

<sup>8</sup> CCC, no. 2423.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, 4-6.

# PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION CURRICULUM

**“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.”**

Matthew 28:19-20

(*The Catholic Youth Bible*, Third Edition. © 2010. Winona,  
MN: St. Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications)

The Religion Curriculum is a means to the fulfillment of this mandate of Christ: to pass on the treasure that has been given to us. It assists in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 84) The curriculum supports "instruction which is authentic in doctrine and contemporary in presentation." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, no.107) The Religion Curriculum, as the foundation of all other learning, enables the students to relate

“all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illumine everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life and about the human person.” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, no. 1)

The Religion Curriculum links religious education and faith formation. Education in the faith is a process touching the heart as well as the mind. Religious education involves the relation between faith and life, knowledge and practice. Formation in the faith integrates religious truth and values.

The message of faith is characterized as Christocentric-trinitarian, liberating, ecclesial, inculturated, comprehensive and meaningful.

“Jesus Christ is the preeminent model for the communication of the faith and the formation of believers in the faith because he became truly human while remaining truly God. God’s eternal Word became flesh to help us know God’s love, to save us, to be our model of holiness, and to have us ‘share in the divine nature.’<sup>1</sup> ...

“Christ’s relationship with his disciples also reveals God’s own methodology as the model for all catechetical methods. In a sign of basic human affirmation, Jesus chose his apostles; they did not choose him.<sup>2</sup> He established a bond of friendship with them that was the context for his teaching. “I have called you friends,” he said, “because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.”<sup>3</sup> ...

“Christ’s methodology was multi-dimensional. It included his words, his signs, and the wonders he worked. He reached out to the poor, to sinners, and to those on the margins of society. He proclaimed insistently the coming of the Kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Pages 92-93.)

Message comes alive in a profession of faith and the proclaiming of Christ. Worship of God is manifest in participation in liturgy, sacraments, prayer, contemplation, and celebration. Community creates the context for receiving the message, the bond for worship, the support for service. Service and actions on behalf of justice are motivated by the following of Christ.

Implementation of the Religion Curriculum presumes the context of a Christian community, a community of faith, hope, and love.

“This integration of religious truth and values with the rest of life is brought about in the Catholic school not only by its unique curriculum but ... by the presence of teachers who express an integrated approach to learning and living ...” (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, no. 104)

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1 2 Pt 1:4.

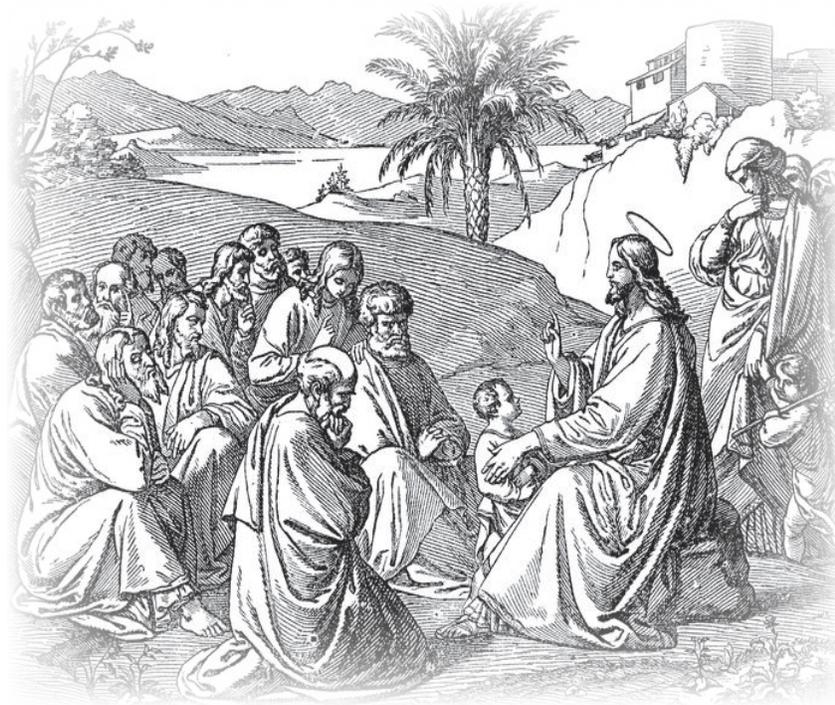
2 Cf. Jn 15:16.

3 Jn 15:15

# PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION CURRICULUM CONTINUED

The Religion Curriculum makes accessible in age-appropriate forms the teachings conveyed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Religion Curriculum encompasses not only knowledge but understandings and applications. The mind, body, heart and soul – the whole being – must be touched by the learning processes. A reverent regard for each person includes openness to God's action in the learner. Faith, ultimately, is a free gift of God inspired and nurtured continually by the Spirit of God.

The Religion Curriculum helps to assure that "our Catholic Identity will permeate every aspect of the school climate and curricular programs." (Diocesan Goal) Modeling the pedagogy of Jesus, the Religion teacher enables each student to become a person knowledgeable in the traditions and heritage of Christianity, a person who integrates beliefs and practices, and a person who participates actively in the Christian Community in worship and service.



# GOALS OF RELIGION CURRICULUM

In an effort to become more authentic communities of faith and centers of evangelization, our schools implement the Diocesan Religion Curriculum whose goals are the following.

Students in our Catholic schools will:

1. Understand that “the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 234)
2. Understand that the “Christian message concentrates on the person of Jesus Christ” and that “this centrality of Christ is found in the Gospel message.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 75)
3. Through an understanding of the “centrality of Christ,” students develop a faith-filled relationship with the person of Christ.
4. Understand and appreciate that the “Holy Spirit draws together the community of the faithful as the Church, the Body of Christ, and leads the Church in giving praise and thanks to the Father.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 109)
5. Recognize that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows”<sup>1</sup>...that is why the Liturgy is ‘the privileged place for catechizing the People of God.’<sup>2</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 110)
6. Understand that “the liturgical life of the Church revolves around the sacraments, with the Eucharist at the center,” and that ‘the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church,’ by which divine life is given to us and celebrated.”<sup>3</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 113)
7. Recognize that “Liturgical prayer is the participation of the People of God in Christ’s work...[and that] the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are the Church’s preeminent experiences of liturgical prayer.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 111)
8. Understand the importance of the seven sacraments in the life of the Church and recognize the appropriate rites of celebration for each sacrament.
9. Understand that “prayer is the basis and expression of the vital and personal relationship of a human person with the living and true God.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 111)
10. Understand, as members of a “worshipping community,” the importance of the liturgical year and all of its celebrations; the place of sacramentals, popular piety and popular devotions, and Marian devotions.
11. Celebrate prayer for various purposes (adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and contrition), and in various forms (communal prayer, private prayer, traditional prayer, spontaneous prayer, gesture, song, meditation, and contemplation). (cf. *National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 113)
12. Understand that the Church is one...
  - “She is one because the source of her unity is the Trinity of Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
  - “She is one because her founder, Jesus Christ, reconciled all persons to the Father through the sacrifice of the cross.”
  - “She is one because the Holy Spirit gathers the faithful into communion and joins them in the Body of Christ.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 210)
13. Understand that “Christian moral formation involves a journey of interior transformation in light of Christ’s Paschal Mystery, which brings about a deep personal conversion to Christ. Conversion to Christ involves confession of faith in him, adherence to his person and his teaching, following in his footsteps, taking on his attitudes, and surrendering the old self in order to take up the new self in Christ.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 163)

<sup>1</sup> SC, no. 10; cf. CCC, no. 1069.

<sup>2</sup> CCC, no. 1074.

<sup>3</sup> CCC, no. 1131.

## GOALS OF RELIGION CURRICULUM CONTINUED

14. Know and understand grace, virtue, the formation of moral conscience, and sin.
15. Know and understand the “teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Decalogue in light of Christ’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 173)
16. Understand that the “call to work for social justice is imbedded in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*. Page 170)
17. Develop the characteristics of a graduate of a Catholic school as stated in the Profile of a Graduate of a Catholic School. These characteristics are a:
  - faith-filled disciple of Christ,
  - Christian leader,
  - centered, well-rounded person,
  - loving person,
  - life-long learner, and
  - healthy person.



# CATECHESIS IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

“Catechetical instruction in the Catholic school should be based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and objectives of the school. It should have its proper place in the order of each day alongside other lessons. It should be coordinated with the catechetical plan of the parish or parishes to which it is connected. The Catholic school “can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis. Since its educational goals are rooted in Christian principles, the school as a whole is inserted into the evangelical function of the Church. It assists in and promotes faith education.”<sup>1</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 9b, page 232)

## ROLE OF RELIGION TEACHERS

“The Catholic school’s effectiveness as a community of faith and a center for evangelization and catechesis depends to a large extent on its teachers of religion. Who they are, what they say, and what they do should be integrated harmoniously if they are to be genuine educators in the faith. ‘The role of the religion teacher is of first importance.’<sup>2</sup> Religion teachers in Catholic schools not only teach the Catholic faith as an academic subject but also bear witness to the truth of what they teach.”

“The religion teacher is the key, the vital component, if the educational goals of the school are to be achieved. But the effectiveness of religious instruction is closely tied to the personal witness given by the teacher; this witness is what brings the content of the lessons to life. Teachers of religion, therefore, must be men and women endowed with many gifts, both natural and supernatural, who are also capable of giving witness to these gifts.”<sup>3</sup>

“Religion teachers in Catholic schools have the same responsibilities and perform many of the same functions of parish catechists. Therefore, they should be practicing Catholics with a thorough knowledge of the Christian message and the ability to communicate it completely, faithfully, and enthusiastically; they should also meet diocesan standards for certification as a catechist.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 9c, page 232)

## ROLE OF ALL TEACHERS

“The distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the Catholic school also depend on the efforts and example of the whole faculty. ‘The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior.’<sup>4</sup> All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry. ‘All members of the faculty, at least by their example, are an integral part of the process of religious education....Teachers’ life style and character are as important as their professional credentials.’<sup>5</sup> Their daily witness to the meaning of mature faith and Christian living has a profound effect on the education and formation of their students.<sup>6</sup> While some situations might entail compelling reasons

1 Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 1988), no. 69.

2 Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), no.59, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccathe/duc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_19821015\\_lay-catholics\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccathe/duc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html) (accessed on August 29, 2003)

3 *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, no. 96.

4 *The Catholic School*, no. 43.

5 *Teach Them*, p.7.

6 Cf. *Teach Them*, p.3.

# GATECHESIS IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONTINUED

for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics.”

“The Catholic school affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with its daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the Gospel message; for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church; for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence, and love of the Liturgy; for building community; for prayer; for proper formation of conscience; for the development of virtue; and for participating in Christian service. In addition, Catholic schools strive to relate all of the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life—science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth. For these reasons, whenever possible, parents should send their children to a Catholic school.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 9d, page 233)

Commitment to ongoing formation in the faith, is based on the concept of education in the faith as an experience touching the heart, as well as the mind. Therefore, the teacher must plan processes that involve the whole person. Learning experiences must incorporate both the cognitive and the affective. Experiences which involve sign, symbol, images, the arts, and ritual ignite the religious imagination.

Going beyond the organization of knowledge and content is essential to the process of religious education. Processes of sharing one’s faith, experiencing community, encountering God in others and in prayer, and living the faith through service must be integral to all religion lessons.

Finally, the environment and relationships fostered by all teachers should be characterized by Christian virtues, especially, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, appreciation of diversity, welcoming and inclusiveness, reverence for life in all its forms, respect for the talents and ability of others, and peace-filled mediation.



# MARY, STAR OF EVANGELIZATION

The following excerpt from the *National Directory for Catechesis* on the singular role of Mary as the model for the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis is presented for prayer and reflection.

"At this moment in history, the Church has unprecedented opportunities to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people and nations. By her vocation as the Virgin Mother of God, Mary is a singular model for the Church's mission of evangelization and catechesis."

"Through the power of the Holy Spirit, she bore the only-begotten Son of God, his Word made flesh, into the world in a wholly unique and unrepeatable proclamation. She was her Son's first catechist. She formed him by her human knowledge of the Scriptures and of God's plan for the salvation of his people, by her habit of daily prayer to the Father, and by her resolute surrender to his will. Mary is "a living catechism [and] the mother and model of catechists."<sup>1</sup>

"Mary was not only Christ's first teacher but also Christ's first disciple. Within the intimacy of family life, Christ formed her in the knowledge of his divine Sonship and of his obedience to the will of his heavenly Father. Through her intercession with Christ during the wedding at Cana, "his disciples began to believe in him."<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, the Church has understood that Mary was present with the other disciples in the upper room when "there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

"As the "Virgin of Pentecost,"<sup>4</sup> Mary is truly the Mother of the Church. Through her union with Christ and her unique proclamation of his Gospel, she continually draws believers to the Church and participates in the sacrifice of her Son and in the Church's work of salvation. The faithful encounter Jesus through Mary. She is the certain path to Christ. "By her complete adherence to the Father's will, to his Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity."<sup>5</sup> She is an incomparable sign of hope for the Church. She is "the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come."<sup>6</sup> Her pilgrimage of faith leads the pilgrim People of God on their journey to encounter the Lord and finally into communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

"From the time of the first evangelization of this continent, the Virgin of Guadalupe has inspired the birth of the Church in the peoples throughout the Americas. They recognize in the *mestiza* face of the Virgin of Guadalupe "an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization."<sup>7</sup> She is rightfully honored as the patroness of all America."

"For the Church in the United States of America, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been the beacon that has led the faithful to encounter their Lord. As the earliest missionaries boldly proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, they preached the Virgin Mary as its perfect realization. The many diverse peoples that compose the Church in the United States continue to look to Mary, the "Star of Evangelization,"<sup>8</sup> to illuminate their way toward communion with the Blessed Trinity. Under her title "Immaculate Conception," Mary is rightfully honored as the patroness of the United States."

"May the Virgin Mary, "whose intercession was once responsible for strengthening the faith of the first disciples," obtain for the Church in the United States "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as she once did for the early Church."<sup>9</sup> Through this gift, there can be the new evangelization and a revitalized catechesis in which Christ's disciples of this new millennium can be his powerful witnesses "in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>10</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*, Pages 300-302)

1 CT, no. 73.

2 Jn 2:11.

3 Acts 2:3-4.

4 CT, no. 73.

5 CCC, no. 967.

6 LG, no. 68.

7 EA, no. 11.

8 EN, no. 82.

9 EA, no. 11.

10 Acts 1:8.

# CATECHETICAL METHODOLOGY

**“God’s word has mighty power; it effects the purpose for which it is intended. More than a message, it is an event that inspires, even compels, action. Christ’s missionary command was just such an event. It impelled the apostles to carry God’s word to the ends of the earth. God infused humanity with the grace of the Holy Spirit in order to bring forth the divine fruit of conversion to Christ and confession of faith — so powerful is the word of God in accomplishing his will.”** (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 89)

The methodology teachers use for proclaiming the Christian message to their students includes many different yet complimentary means. All forms of methodology, however, must be rooted in Christ.

Before the teacher’s methodology, is the methodology of God. “God’s Revelation is the self-disclosure of the loving communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan...God’s own methodology engages persons and communities in light of their circumstances and their capacity to accept and interpret Revelation...This is the pedagogy of God. It is the source and model of the pedagogy of faith.”<sup>1</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 90)

Using God’s methodology as the paradigm, the Church chooses diverse methods of catechesis that are in accord with the Gospel. According to the *National Directory for Catechesis*, “a variety of methods is required in order to ensure that the Gospel is ‘proclaimed to all the nations.’”<sup>2</sup> (Page 96) The various methods outlined by the Directory include the following:

## **Learning Through Human Experience**

“Catechesis links human experience to the revealed word of God, helping people ascribe Christian meaning to their own existence. It enables people to explore, interpret, and judge their basic experiences in light of the Gospel.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 98)

## **Learning By Discipleship**

“Catechesis nourishes a living, explicit, and fruitful faith lived in discipleship to Jesus Christ. The disciple is brought to intimate communion with Jesus Christ and a deeper understanding that ‘by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God.’” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 99)

## **Learning Within the Christian Community**

“The effectiveness of catechesis depends to a great extent on the vitality of the Christian community in which it is given... the Christian community is the context in which individuals undertake their journey toward conversion to Christ and discipleship in his name.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 100)

## **Learning Within the Christian Family**

“The Christian family is ordinarily the first experience of the Christian community and the primary environment for growth in faith. Because it is the ‘church of the home’<sup>3</sup>...it is a place in which the word of God is received and from which it is extended. Within the Christian family, parents are the primary educators in the faith...’with regard to their children.’”<sup>4</sup> (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 100-101)

## **Learning Through the Witness of the Catechist**

“Next to home and family, the witness of the catechist may be pivotal in every phase of the catechetical process. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catechists powerfully influence those being catechized by their faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transparent example of their Christian lives. For catechesis to be effective, catechists must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. They must firmly believe in his gospel and its power to transform lives.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, page 101)

## **Learning By Heart**

“Effective catechesis also incorporates learning ‘by heart.’...

The principal formulations of the faith; basic prayers; key biblical themes; personalities; and expressions; and factual information regarding worship and Christian life should be learned by heart...

In addition to the memorization of basic prayers and formulations of the faith, memorization of favorite psalms, songs, prayers, and poetry in praise of Christ our Savior is an effective form of catechesis that nourishes the human heart and helps to form the human spirit in Christ.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, Pages 102-103)

1 Cf. DV, no. 15.

2 CT, no. 51.

3 FC, no. 38.

4 LG, no. 11.