



OFFICE OF
EVANGELIZATION
AND CATECHESIS

Strategies for a Whole Parish Approach to Catechesis

A Whole Parish Approach to Catechesis (WPAC) requires that parishes integrate and unify their catechetical efforts so that:

- a) every sector of the parish has an opportunity for catechesis; and
- b) the parish becomes a curriculum in which unifying faith themes link the various age groups.

It is important to remember that when converting to a Whole Parish Approach to catechesis it is not necessary or even advisable to discard or change every program that is in place. A better strategy is to evaluate what is working, and build on what is already there. The key lies in the coordination of efforts and overall pastoral planning. Some examples of strategies along with links to resources that have been utilized in the WPAC are listed below.

For more help in implementing Whole Parish catechesis contact the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Liturgy and Worship

Liturgy is not only the source and summit of Christian life, but also the starting point and organizing structure for a WPAC. The celebration of the liturgy must not only be done according to the norms, but also a dynamic, life-oriented experience in order to be evangelizing. Liturgy celebrated in this manner will foster conversion of heart and mind. Parish catechesis flows from the liturgy.

For resources on Prayer, go to: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/publishers.htm>

For a liturgical assessment tool go to:

http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/worship/pdf/Liturgical_Assessment_Tool.pdf

Parish Based Retreats

Many parishes throughout the country are renewing a focus on retreats as an important avenue for building faith in the whole community.

- Offer retreats at different times and with different structures to accommodate a variety of schedules.
- Utilize a format that includes all generations together or groups them by age level for input and activity.

Many parishes create their own retreats.

For some parish-based retreat models, go to <http://store.pastoralplanning.com/pabare.html> or

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/retreats.htm>

Question of the Week

The means of reaching the largest number of parishioners is through the Sunday Eucharist. Parishes implementing WPAC often put one or two questions for reflection based on the Sunday readings and how they relate to real life in the Sunday bulletin and/or in the announcements at Mass. These can be used at home all week, individually or with the family, and at parish meetings.

For resources on implementing the Question of the Week go to:

<http://store.pastoralplanning.com/quofwerere.html>
<http://www.wholecommunitycatechesis.com/pages/questions.html>
<http://www.webelieveweb.com/gather.cfm?language=en>
http://your.harcourtreligion.com/lifelong_catechesis/parish_qow_6.jsp

The archdiocese also publishes a prayer and reflection aid for use at parish gatherings, known as *Where Two or Three Are Gathered*. The aid utilizes the Sunday readings and has questions for reflection.

For ways to use the infusion process go to:

http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/Suggestions_for_Format.htm.

For a copy of the aid go to <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/prayeraid.pdf>

Spiral Approach to Curriculum

Many religion textbooks for children use a spiral approach to the curriculum. Broadly speaking this means that the same themes are taught across the grade level span every year, but at increasingly deeper levels. This enables the parish catechetical program to adopt a topical approach for the whole parish community.

For help in adapting your curriculum to a spiral approach go to:

<http://www.wholecommunitycatechesis.com/pages/series.html>

For help in using the spiral dimension of the *Faith First* series:

<http://www.faithfirst.com/html/dre/aboutff.html>

For help in using the spiral dimension of the Call to Faith series:

<http://your.harcourtreligion.com/pof/preview/pdfs/integration.pdf>

For help in using the spiral dimension of the We Believe series:

<http://www.webelieveweb.com/about.cfm>

Adult Faith Gatherings

Bringing together adults of all ages to nourish and sustain conversion. Some forms of adult faith gatherings:

- Small faith communities
- Scripture study groups
- Parish Renewal processes and Speakers on various topics
- Parish Missions
- Advent and Lenten Soup Suppers with a speaker

You can find resources on these forms on the OEC adult faith formation site at

http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/AFF_approaches.htm

Also, see *Nurturing Adult Faith: A Manual for Parish Leaders*. Go to www.catholiccincinnati.org/oec/aff_resources.htm for table of contents and order information.

Intergenerational Events

A cornerstone of WPAC in many parishes is the creation of opportunities for children and adults to come together in learning settings. The basic premise is that “people learn the way they live” which is in communities that cut across generational lines. In these gatherings adult and children experience together aspects of the faith and are able to share their ideas and feelings in immediate ways. Intergenerational learning also facilitates putting the faith into practice in the home.

- A major resource developer, training organization, and proponent of intergenerational catechesis has been the Center for Ministry Development. Click here to go to the CMD site: <http://secure.cmdnet.org/index.cfm>
- Perhaps the best known programmatic approach to Intergenerational learning is found in the *Generations of Faith Project*. To go to the *Generations of Faith* Web site click here: <http://www.generationsofffaith.org/>
- A leader in Intergenerational catechesis has been John Roberto who continues to publish under LifelongFaith Associates. To go to the website click here: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/>