



# HOW TO DELIVER AN EFFECTIVE CATECHISM LESSON

**Saint Francis Church, Jebel Ali**  
**Catechist Training Programme: August 2014**

Welcome and introductions.  
Making connections



ACTIVITY

In threes find 10 things you all have in common which have nothing to do with anything connecting to the church

**CLASS SHARING**

# **THE TEN ESSENTIAL PARTS OF AN EFFECTIVE** **CATECHISM LESSON**

( Agreed following a workshop carried out by  
the Christian Formation Committee April 2014)

- 1. A lesson plan, based on the agreed syllabus and including a key identifiable objective**
- 2. Prayer**
- 3. An engaging method of delivery, appropriate to the age, experience and faith development of the children (Methodology)**
- 4. Interactive experiences**
- 5. An environment/ atmosphere which creates effective conditions for learning and faith development**

**6. Appropriate preparation and organization of resources**

**7. Classroom expectations: Rules/Routines**

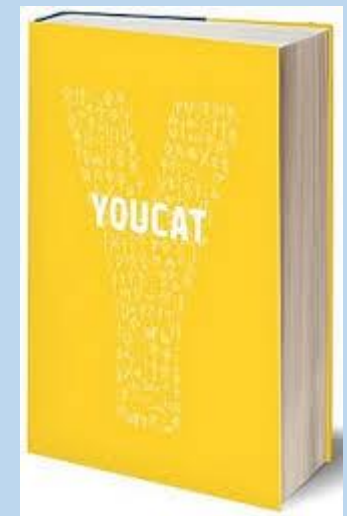
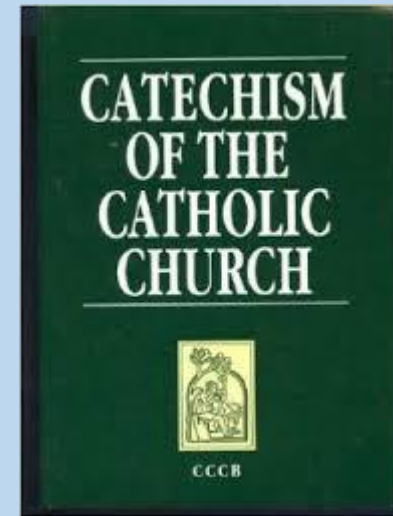
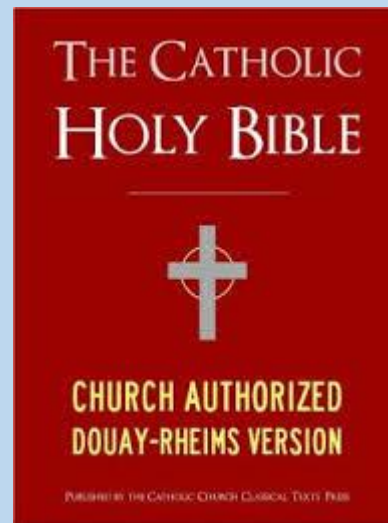
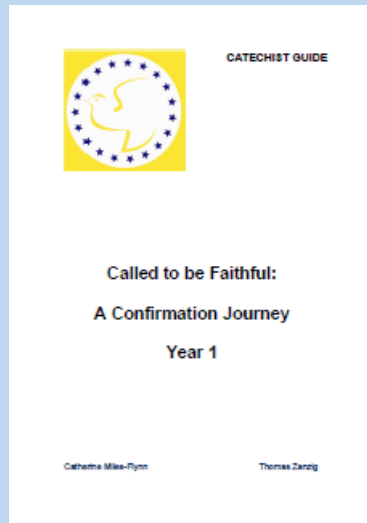
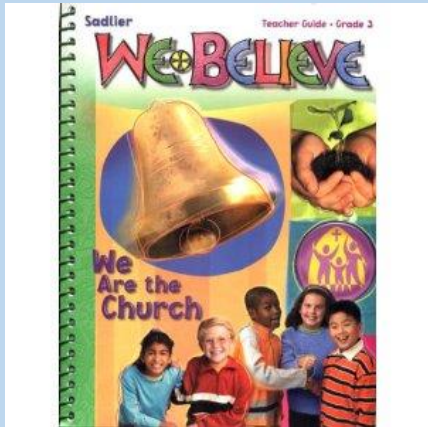
**8. Scripture references and/or references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**9. How the learning from the lesson can be applied – to include also evidence of a link with parents**

**10. Appropriate assessment strategies:**

# Appropriate preparation and organization of resources

A lesson plan, based on the agreed syllabus and including a key identifiable objective



Where do I start?

**An engaging method of delivery**, appropriate to the age, experience and faith development of the children (Methodology)



**Interactive experiences**



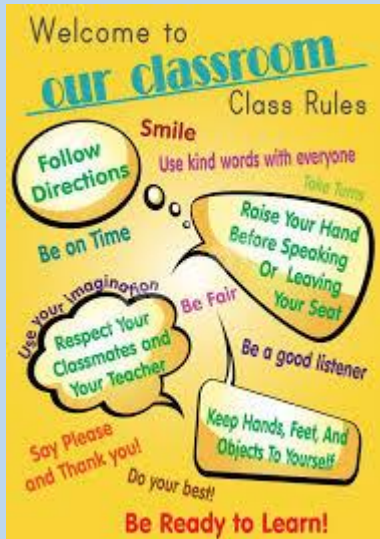
**How can I keep them active and engaged. Have you seen how much there is to cover in this chapter!!**



# An environment/ atmosphere which creates effective conditions for **LEARNING** and faith development

Classroom expectations: Rules/Routines

Appropriate assessment strategies



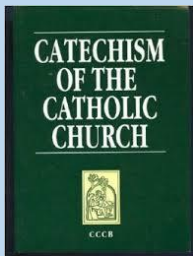
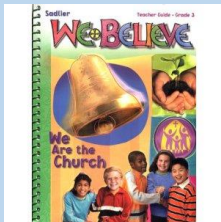
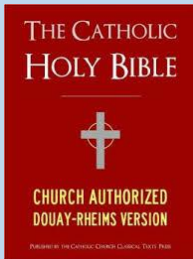
Will they all come wanting to learn?  
Should it be like school?



An engaging method of delivery, appropriate to the age, experience  
and **faith development of the children** (Methodology)

Prayer

Scripture references and/or references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church



### STAGES IN FAITH

**1 Acceptance**  
Up to about the age of six, we accept the faith of our parents and teachers without question. ●

**2 Growing Awareness**  
In later childhood, (7-11), we begin to be aware of the fact that others do not always accept the same faith as our parents. But we still tend to accept without much questioning the beliefs we have been taught. Some adults remain in this stage all their lives. ●

**3 Belonging to the gang**  
In early teens, we want to be popular with our peer-group. So we tend to accept their values, finding our security in their acceptance. It is more than possible for an adult to stay in this stage, finding security in business, politics, and even Church, and never thinking for oneself as a member of that community. ●

**4 Questioning**  
In late teens, with adult responsibility looming, we tend to question the values both of our parents, and of our peer-group. This is a necessary

**5 Putting it all together**  
Maturity of faith is reached when we come to commit ourselves to God, having seriously looked at the alternatives, seen the good in others' views, but having come to our own understanding. ●

**6 Into the world**  
At this stage, we are less interested in our own faith and more in the faith of others, as Pope John Paul calls it, in "communicating Christ". ●

These stages are not uniform; and some of us might not get past Stage Two or Three! Even more, some of us might alternate from day to day between the various stages. Who ever really matures? But these stages, based upon the work of the educationalist James Fowler, can be at least useful guidelines to set us thinking. If we can understand these stages of growth, then we can be sensitive towards others, and open to the work of the Holy Spirit to change our lives. ●

**FAITH IS...**  
Readers tell how they experience faith:  
— a gift from God which enables us to trust Him.  
— the joy of learning about God and being able to obey Him.  
— everything I would find life completely worthless without.  
— "Rome has spoken."

**IF YOU WERE ACCUSED OF BEING A CHRISTIAN WOULD THERE BE ENOUGH EVIDENCE?**



Can I really make a difference in one hour a week?

# How the learning from the lesson can be applied – to include also evidence of a link with parents

**Unit 1 SHARING FAITH as a Family**

Note the Quote: "The quality that gives a religion its life is not its dogma, but its love for God and for His people." - Pope John Paul II

Where Does God Fit in Your Family?

How would you assess the presence of God in your home? When was the last time you or someone in your family stopped to marvel at something? It might be the beauty of the breakfast table or the smile of a small child. It's not necessary to create special experiences for the weekend of God's creation.

Our busy lives can dilute ability to be available to family life. It's common to take bread crumbed as for granted. But everyone has special qualities and specific skills. Consider making one of the positive from the week.

Family members bring us to the room that is for them. Being very mindful of all of our blessings helps us to be aware of God's continual presence in our lives.

Prayer is our bridge to God's wonderful creation. Jesus, through His love, need to be brought to the table. It is not a part of work day, especially as we become more educated to those glimpses of grace that happen all the time.

From the Catechism: "Jesus' entry on the occasion of his return to the Temple of His Father's Church." - Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000

What Your Child Will Learn in Unit 1

Circle 3 of the 10 Bible program focuses on the social dimensions of the Catholic Church. With 11 pages and 100 photos, the children will experience Jesus as the Son of God who shows us God's love. The children will become more aware that they provide the good news of Christ to what they see and do. The message is presented as a story with the help of the Holy Spirit. My church, dear, remembers Jesus the Christ, and sometimes with me. The children recognize their presence in the Church, and that God is with us. The children recognize their presence in the Church, and that God is with us. The children recognize their presence in the Church, and that God is with us.

Meditation Exercise

Read with your family or friends. Use the words and phrases in the prayer to help you think about the things that are important to you. Use the words and phrases in the prayer to help you think about the things that are important to you.

Plan & Preview

Place of worship or staff paper. Staff paper can be used for the 10 Bible program. Place of worship. Staff paper. Staff paper can be used for the 10 Bible program.

**CHAPTER 1 SHARING FAITH with My Family**

Sharing What I Learned

Discuss the following with your family:

- John the Baptist and Jesus at the Jordan River
- Jesus' Baptism and prayer
- Jesus' Mission
- the Kingdom of God

Family Faith Checklist

Ask your family to complete the Family Faith Checklist. Share your experiences.

Our Family

Check the following items that you have done with your family:

- At home
- At school
- In the parish
- In the community

Visit the website: [www.MELBUCweb.com](http://www.MELBUCweb.com)

Connect to the Catechism: The Catholic Church's teaching on the sacraments, the Eucharist, and the Mass.



How can I be sure that my time with the children has been useful?

Therefore lessons must be:

**WELL PREPARED**

**CHILD CENTERED**

**FOCUSED ON LEARNING**

**FAITH BUILDING**

**USEFUL**

# FOCUSED ON LEARNING

Should we tell the children what we're about to LEARN in each catechism lesson?

**Hopefully**

Should we tell the children what LEARNING will have taken place by the end of the catechism lesson?

**YES!**

THEREFORE:

# PREPARATION

The lesson must have a **main**.....**DISCUSS/SHARE**

**focus**

**theme**

**aim**

**objective**

One central core idea, concept, skill, piece of knowledge that **all** of the children will have learnt by the end of the lesson.

The Religion Teacher's

# Guide to Lesson Planning

With 250  
Activities and  
Teaching  
Strategies!

By Jared Dees

[www.thereligionteacher.com](http://www.thereligionteacher.com)

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[www.thereligionteacher.com/guide-to-lesson-planning-resources.](http://www.thereligionteacher.com/guide-to-lesson-planning-resources)

Learning Objectives consist of three parts:

**SWBAT** + **learning verb**

+ **topic**

**SWBAT** means...

Students will be able to.....



# learning verb

This must be a specific **ACTION VERB** that can be assessed

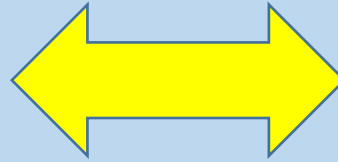
It is not enough to simply say that students will **LEARN** something or that you will **TEACH** something

The Learning that takes place in  
Catechism lessons is usually of two  
types:

**HEAD** : LEARNING **ABOUT** THE  
CATHOLIC RELIGION

**HEART**: LEARNING **FROM** THE  
EXPERIENCE OF BEING  
EXPOSED TO THE CATHOLIC  
RELIGION

# HEAD KNOWLEDGE and HEART KNOWLEDGE



Being aware of this connection helps the children understand how they act on and apply the head knowledge so that it can make a difference in their lives.

**USEFUL**

We need to be very clear about what type of learning we are expecting to take place in our lesson.

Otherwise we will not be able to truly assess whether we have been successful.

**FOCUSED ON LEARNING**

## ACTIVITY

Write a lesson objective for any catechism lesson.

Remember.....

Learning Objectives consist of three parts:

**SWBAT** + learning verb

+ topic

CLASS SHARING

- 1) Explain the sacrament of reconciliation.
- 2) Describe different forms of prayer.
- 3) Describe how you and your friends show others that you are workers for God's Kingdom
- 4) Develop a list of activities that will help you work with others to live a holy life.
- 5 ) Retell the story of the Prodigal Son.
- 6 ) Apply the values expressed in the way Jesus forgave sinners to your life.

CATECHIST  
GOAL



# FOCUSED ON LEARNING

Should we tell the children what we're about to LEARN in each catechism lesson?

**Hopefully**

Should we tell the children

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**YES!**

THEREFORE:

# FOCUSED ON LEARNING

Should we tell the children what we're about to LEARN in each catechism lesson?

**Hopefully**

Should we tell the children what LEARNING will have taken place by the end of the catechism lesson?

**CHILD CENTERED**

**YES!**

**THEREFORE:**

There must be a very clear way in which you know if the lesson has been successful.

**success criteria**

**assessment criteria**

So **we** must know very clearly what  
SUCCESS looks like.

and

The **children** must know very clearly  
what SUCCESS looks like.

## Activity

Think what might we expect the children would be able to do, say or feel which would tell you that they had been successful in achieving these goals/objectives?

Catechist Goal 1: (or Objective)

(SWBAT) explore why Mary is the greatest of all the saints.

Catechist Goal 2:

(SWBAT) explain the sacrament of reconciliation.

Catechist Goal 3:

(SWBAT) challenge the students to expand and deepen their image of God.

Catechist Goal 4:

(SWBAT) describe different forms of prayer.

OUR FAITH  
RESPONSE

## Catechist Goal 1:

To **explore** why Mary is the greatest of all the saints.

## Faith Response:

I can **appreciate** Mary's role in my life and in the church and I can **imitate** her example.



Catechist Goal 2:

To **explain** the sacrament of reconciliation.

Faith Response:

I can **identify** the ways I can **forgive, or have forgiven** others.

### Catechist Goal 3:

To **challenge** the students to **expand** and **deepen** their image of God.

### Faith Response:

I can **represent** my relationship with God in an illustration and **explain** why I have drawn what I have.

Catechist Goal 4:

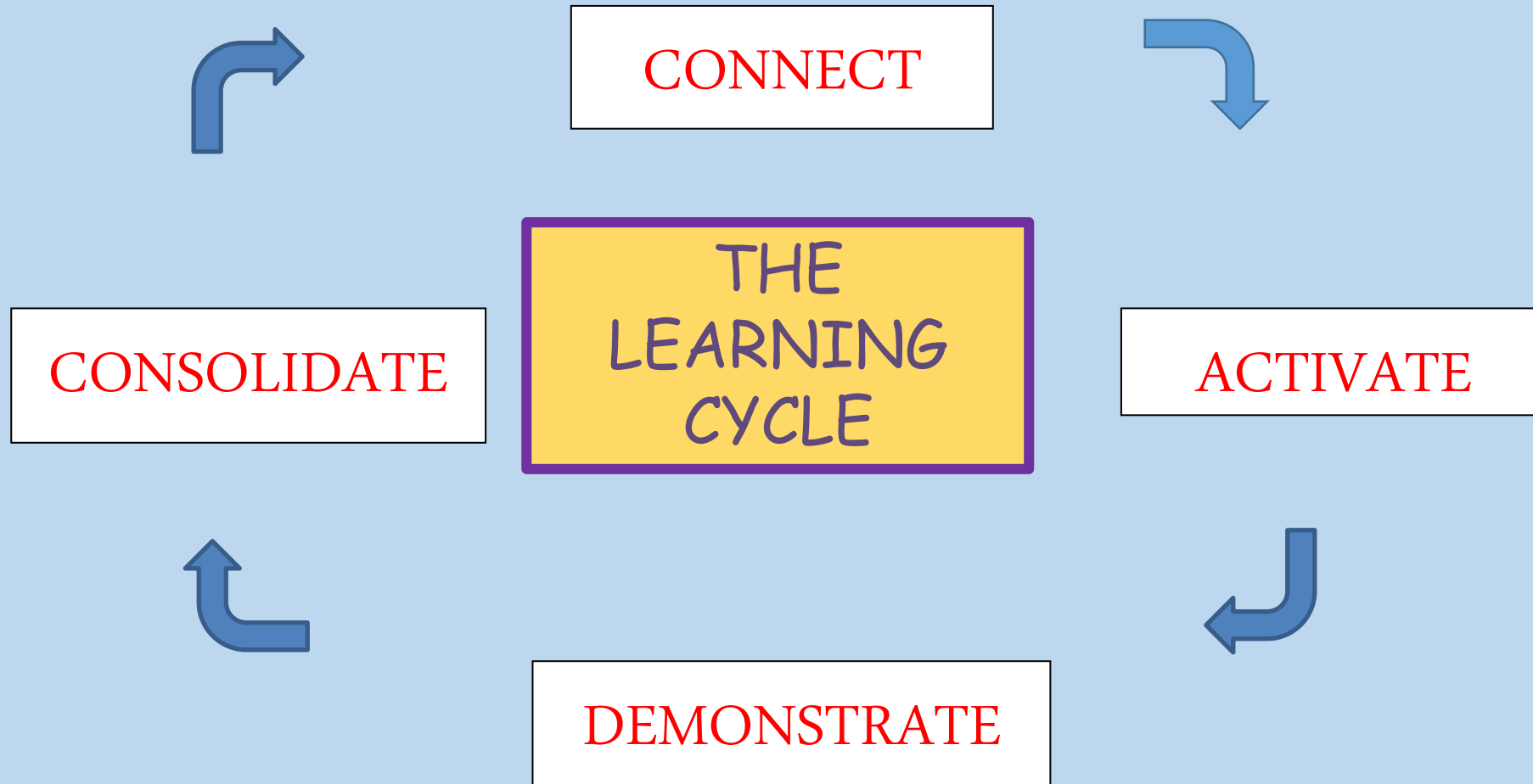
To **describe** different forms of prayer.

Faith Response:

I can **pray** each day for myself and others.

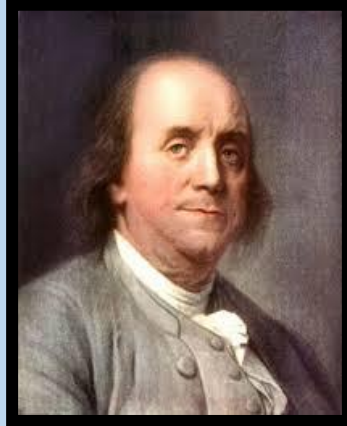
**FAITH BUILDING**

# The 4 part “ACCELERATED LEARNING” lesson structure



# The sample lesson plan

“ By failing to  
prepare you are  
preparing to fail”



Benjamin Franklin

## **Session # 2:**

**Lesson planning; Creativity in Catechesis; Active Learning Styles; Catechetical resources & websites**

**Creativity in Catechesis; Active Learning Styles**

- **Teaching CREATIVELY** involves us in using imaginative approaches to make the learning more interesting, exciting and effective.

• S.Cowley

- **Teaching for CREATIVITY** means teachers developing young peoples own creative thinking or behaviour
  - NACCE



- Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching.
- Dfes

People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.

D.Carnegie

An essential aspect of **CREATIVITY** is not being afraid to fail.

E.Land

- The courage to take risks and persistence are the key characteristics of the **CREATIVE** person.

- E.Lilly

In **creating** the only  
hard thing is to begin

J. Lowell

- Teaching CREATIVELY involves us in using imaginative approaches to make the learning more **interesting, exciting** and effective.
- Teaching for CREATIVITY means teachers developing young peoples own creative thinking or behaviour
- Children learn better when they are excited and **engaged** – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching.
- People rarely succeed unless they **have fun** in what they are doing.
- An essential aspect of CREATIVITY is **not being afraid to fail.**
- The courage to **take risks** and **persistence** are the key characteristics of the CREATIVE person.
- In creating the only hard thing is to begin

**CHILD CENTERED**

**USEFUL**

# You may still be asking yourself the question...

## HOW .....

- Can I make my lessons exciting?
- Can I engage the children and keep them active?
- Can I be interesting to them
- Can I take risks?
- Can I make the lesson “fun”?
- Can I achieve the balance between fostering the necessary reverence and the fun (enjoyment)

# By Using Interactive Whole Class Teaching

How do you make your whole class  
teaching interactive?



- Questioning and discussion

- Pausing, and asking students what comes next

- Children demonstrating to the whole class

- Paired talk

- By teaching "Active Listening"

- Block out key words from text and ask students to speculate, by reasoning, what may be concealed

- Using Group Work effectively to develop the quality of discussion

## ACTIVITY

- 1) On your own **THINK** about why you are a Catechist: **One minute**
- 2) In a **PAIR** discuss why you are a Catechist: **Two minutes**
- 3) Each pair now **SHARE** about why you are a Catechist with another pair.
- 4) Now in your group of four devise and agree a set of rules for effective group work

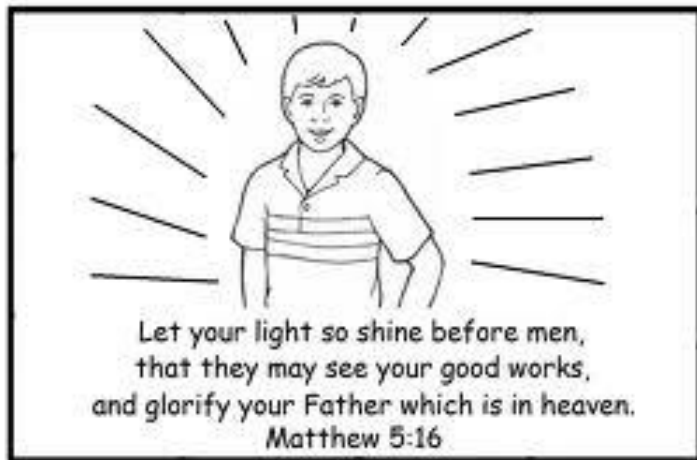
FINAL ACTIVITY  
(But the most important!!!)

Which of the 10 essential parts of an effective Catechism lesson do you think is the most important?

- 1. A lesson plan, based on the agreed syllabus and including a key identifiable objective**
- 2. Prayer**
- 3. An engaging method of delivery, appropriate to the age, experience and faith development of the children**  
**(Methodology)**
- 4. Interactive experiences**
- 5. An environment/ atmosphere which creates effective conditions for learning and faith development**
- 6. Appropriate preparation and organization of resources**
- 7. Classroom expectations: Rules/Routines**
- 8. Scripture references and/or references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church**
- 9. How the learning from the lesson can be applied – to include also evidence of a link with parents**
- 10. Appropriate assessment strategies:**

There must be, above all else, for effective Catechesis to take place.....

**An environment/ atmosphere which creates effective conditions  
for learning and faith development**



**FAITH BUILDING**

SO THEREFORE .....

THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE IS NO BOOK AT ALL.

IT IS YOU, THE CATECHIST:

Carol Eipers, the Director of Catechetics for Sadlier, who produce the text book says:

*“As the lesson progresses, listen to the children. Are they engaged, interested, evidencing understanding? If not, how can the discussion or activity be altered to be more helpful to their growth in faith? Let them ask, share and answer so that the faith becomes their own.”*

Eleanor Bronwell, Vice President at Sadlier says:

***“Create an environment for catechesis within you.”***

Kevin Treston, an Australian writer of religious literature sums up what is essential:

***“What matters most in teaching is not the mechanics of the interchange of ideas but the power of the teacher’s values and expertise to transform the hearts and minds of those engaged in the experience of teaching and learning.”***

### The 10 essentials for an effective Catechism lesson

- An environment/ atmosphere which creates effective conditions for learning and faith development
- A lesson plan, based on the agreed syllabus and including a key identifiable objective
- Prayer
- Engaging teaching methods, appropriate to the age, experience and faith development of the children
- Interactive experiences
- Appropriate preparation and organization of resources
- Classroom expectations: Rules/Routines
- Scripture references and/or references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- How the learning from the lesson can be applied – to include also evidence of a link with parents
- Appropriate assessment strategies





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