

CATECHETICAL STAFF

A. WHO IS A CATECHIST?

No methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charism given to him (her) by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only his (her) human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments.

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Catechists come from all walks of life. In all their diversity, what they have in common is a call by the local community in God's name to share their faith in Jesus Christ. Recognized by the local parish community as people of faith and in full communion with the Church, they accept the challenge to nurture and foster the faith life of the adults, adolescents and children they teach. From cradle to grave, the Church depends on the ministry of the catechist to help faith both take root (evangelization) and flourish (catechesis). This ministry is supported and sustained for the building up of the Reign of God by the lavish gifts of the Holy Spirit .



Catechists, like all Christians, are on a journey of faith. The life of Jesus is the guide for this journey and the life of the living Christ is the strength to make the journey. This journey can only be done with joy if it is nourished by **an active prayer life**.

This prayer life requires active participation in the public liturgical life of the parish. It should also include a regular reading of the Scriptures as a principle source of spiritual growth. It must learn to rest comfortably in silence with the presence of God.

A catechist is one characterized by a **thirst for the truth**. They pursue the truth by participating in learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Scriptures and our Christian Tradition. Through their participation in prayer and learning, the catechist is a living witness to the importance of the search for truth. Only when these conditions are fulfilled can catechesis be recognized not as a teaching “about” the faith but rather as a mentoring “in” the faith.

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As witnesses of the Christian message, catechists are **proclaimers of the Word**. However, the Word that is proclaimed is the living Word of God, Christ Jesus. Our proclamation is an invitation to a relationship with God through Christ and animated in the Holy Spirit. The catechist invites the community to join in the dance of the Trinity. The credibility of a catechist's witness to this living Word is not only found in words spoken but most importantly in the quality of life as it is lived within the community of faith and among the students.

Catechists act in the name of the Church. The role of the catechist is an ecclesial (official Church) role. No one can claim for themselves the title of catechist; it is conferred by the community. This role is essential to the life of the church as the church works to carry out its mission. All catechists therefore must strive to be both a sign and instrument of the Spirit's presence in the world. This is important for catechists to remember because not only is the catechist a "herald" (proclaimer) of the Word but they are also **a sacrament of the presence of God** to the extent that they are credible. With this challenge also comes the mandate to oppose injustice in today's world.

Beyond being a person of prayer and a witness to the Gospel, the catechist is one who is gifted by God to make the Word come alive in the hearts of those who listen. The catechist must be **a creative communicator of the Word of God**. The catechist must be a listener, skilled to listen to those they serve so that they can shape the Word of God in such a way that the listeners can hear and respond.

Most of all a catechist must be **a lover**. The catechist must love God and they must love the students.

These qualities, with all their idealism, lift up the ministry of the catechist and foster on-going faith development and confidence in ministry which is always accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit.