

Policy 401.20

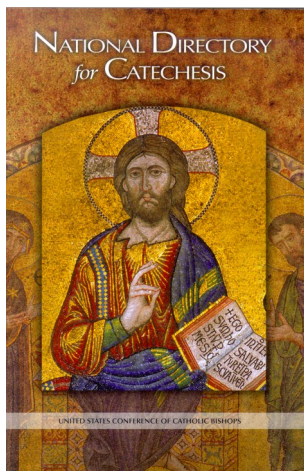
42 Hours of Catechesis

(what does that really mean?)

Where Does This Come From?

The organization of your parish religious education program is guided by two significant texts.

The first is the one identified in the box to the right and the second



is the one pictured here. The first one is published by the Vatican *The General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) and the second is the companion volume published for the Church in the United States by the Bishops of the U.S. called the *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC).

Religious education is said to have four main tasks: **message, community, worship and service**. These four elements are the foundation needed in a person's life upon which

to establish a life of faith. In a previous time when the family and the culture were mostly supportive, the work of religious education was mainly to accomplish the first goal which is the "promotion of knowledge of the faith." It will come as no surprise that as the family and culture are less able to support our work in the tasks of community, worship and service, parish programs have had to expand their offerings so children and youth have an opportunity to develop a solid foundation for a truly mature Catholic life.

So How Do I Put All of This Together?

One image that may help you understand your role in all of this is that of a cook. A cook has to pay attention to two things: the recipe and the people enjoying the finished product. If you don't follow the

recipe - well you will cook something - but the chances that it will turn out as intended is pretty small. And yet, on the other hand, the cook has to know that this group of people hate spicy food - so the recipe has to be

adjusted so people will enjoy what has been prepared.



General Directory For Catechesis

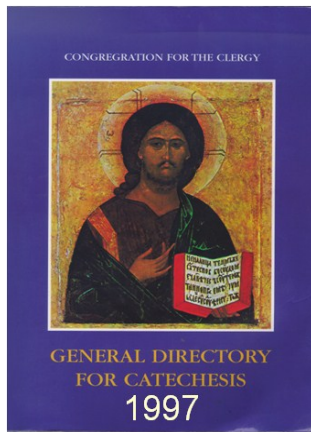
Tasks of Catechesis

1. Promoting knowledge of faith including moral formation
2. Education for Community Life
3. Liturgical education including teaching people to pray
4. Missionary (initiation service)

How important is all of this?

"All of these tasks are necessary. As the vitality of the human body depends on the proper function of all of its organs, so also the maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions...When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development."

GDC #87



The Recipe

In our case the recipe is determined by the tradition of the Church. The recipe calls for **message, community, worship and service**. The parish is expected to provide these over the course of **42 hours per year**. The message ingredient is determined by the diocesan curriculum

supporting section 500 of diocesan Religious Education Policy. To adequately learn the message, children and youth must know that they belong to three mutually supportive communities: their family, their parish community and the community of their

learning peers. One cannot learn if they do not feel that they belong and that they are safe. Catholics are defined by the reality that worship is at the center of our faith: the Mass. At the end of Mass we are sent to serve, we are told to “go” do what Jesus just did for us.

Who’s Coming to Dinner

Well, the guest list is quite diverse. There are some whose family life is strongly religious and others not so much. Some of the them go to school together all day and so know each other well and some go

to different school districts and don’t know anyone. Some families have belonged to the parish for generations and others for only a short time. Little ones need security and

belonging while teens are learning to stretch their wings and need to have their security challenged by the Gospel that calls us to love our neighbors - even those outside our safe community.

The Head Chef

Jesus is the model to be followed. He knew just what people needed because he listened deeply, and then invited and challenged people into faithfulness.

The Cook

Your job as the “cook” is to determine how the ingredients are blended just right to produce a disciple. **Message** is the base ingredient - too little and it all falls apart; too much and it is bland and gummy.

Community is the binder that gives discipleship body and substance. Without community, discipleship is lifeless and limp. **Worship** is the ingredient that creates richness and gives discipleship its

savory depth. Without this depth, discipleship is just blah. **Service** is the spice that heats up the recipe and gives it boldness and zest. Skip any of these and you get only a mediocre Catholic.

Create the right blend for the various groups you serve.