

Our Lady's Catechists

CWL Registered Charity

Working with Children

The aim of these lessons is to be of help to you as you work with your children in the study of their Catholic Faith.



It is hoped to benefit both you and the children as you talk together about the Seasons of the Church Year.

There are leaflets available for each week that cover the Sunday Celebrations and/or particular feast days.

The Church year begins four Sundays before Christmas and is in three yearly cycles, A, B, and C. The letter of the year changes on the First Sunday in Advent.

We are currently in Year 'B' which ends on the Feast of Christ the King, November 22nd 2009, and Year 'C' begins on November 28th and ends on the Feast of Christ the King 2010. Year 'A'. begins the following Sunday 2010.

Remember when working with children the best way to hold their interest is to let them participate and be as involved as possible.



Involvement applies to the greatest prayer we have, Holy Mass. If you have planned ahead with your child, going to Mass will be a joy not a time to endure, be quiet and be good.

From a very early age your child becomes familiar with the actions of the priest during the celebration. You need to be able to answer questions like, why do we dip our fingers in the water? What is Holy Water? Why do we go down on one knee before taking our seat in church? How well can you answer these simple questions?

PLANNING

The first things to keep in mind about discussing the Sunday Gospel is that it should be a happy time, not too formal, but you still need to be prepared.

There is a short passage on Background Information to help you get started on each paper. The aims, prayers and conclusion are there to help you not to restrict you. If you have your own reflection on the theme use it. The prayer also is only for help. Write your own prayers together, and use music where you are able.



If you read through all the material for the week before discussing it with your child you will be better prepared for any questions your child might have.

Plan to be with your child to give help and instructions. Complete at least one of the activities provided, but feel free to add your own without letting your child get bored or tired.

You know your child and will be able to adapt parts to it to make the time together more suitable to the age of the child or children?

You could ask for idea from a parish catechist, or other parents. What is the aim of the lesson what do you hope to achieve?

Even with only one child you could still include singing, or watching a video. This all depends on the amount of time you have for each session. Perhaps doing the Gospel reading at a different time from the activity, but you would need to go over it again.

Set this time with your child or children not as a school lesson, but as a time together to talk about Jesus. If you are not using extra material, don't let the session go beyond 45 minutes. Try to have the time as peaceful as possible without interruption from TV, telephone or other adults.



Pray before you plan then start and end each session with you and your child making the sign of the cross.

Foreword

For a parent or a catechist there is a deep joy in sharing our faith with children. Our faith is like a pearl of great price that we treasure and that we wish to bequeath to those we love. But anyone who has ever tried to do it will know how challenging children can be. So often they seem to have the knack of asking an innocent question that we do not know how to answer, or phrasing it in such a way that, put on the spot, we just cannot think of a way of explaining to them. That can be very good for us because it means we have to think about what we believe, and so our children teach us more than we teach them. But it can sometimes feel that we are short-changing them if we have to say, "I don't know", or "You'll understand that when you grow up". The worst thing that we can do is to make up an answer. It is far better to admit ignorance than to tell them something that is not true.

But where can we find help? I should like to welcome this series of workbooks as an excellent addition to the resources that are available, and I believe that it should provide parents and catechists with some very practical and prayerful guidance as they work through the Church's year with their children. It is firmly rooted in the teaching of the Catholic Church, and yet it is presented in a fun way that is attractive to children and adults alike that leads naturally into prayer. I suspect even parish priests may feel tempted to take a peek at these sheets as they prepare their Sunday homilies.

But no resource, no matter how good, can succeed unless the people using it are nourishing their own spiritual lives too. Catechesis, sharing our faith, is not simply a matter of teaching a body of knowledge. It is much more than that. It is passing on, entire, the life of God. We do it by the words we speak and by sharing our prayer life with others, but most of all we do it by the way we live and behave. We cannot pass on what we have not got. In a recent letter to catechists, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, said this:

"I urge you to pray and cultivate with trust a relationship of love, devotion, attentiveness and silence with the Lord.

"In a world which is often hopeless, in the grip of violence and selfishness, let every gesture, every smile, every word of yours be a

living testimony that the Lord is victorious over sin and death, and that love is possible!

"Rediscover the deep roots of your witness in baptism and confirmation. Nourish your service as catechists with the food of the strong: the Eucharist.

"Reveal the face of Christ to all those you meet, through the grace and faithfulness of your service. "

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May God be with you, and may these booklets help you in your very privileged task of sharing your faith with your children.

Fr. Harry Curtis

Spiritual Director/Theological Advisor to Our Lady's Catechists



Mosaic of the five loaves and two fish.
It is in the Church of St Peter's primacy
on the shores of Lake Galilee.

If the CD does not open automatically, go to 'My Computer' and click on the CD Icon for the entitled Year A, or B or C according to the year you are using..