

SEVEN SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL CATECHISTS

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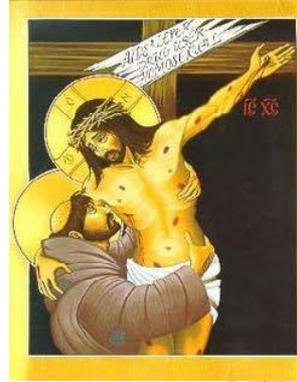
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OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Why am I doing this module?

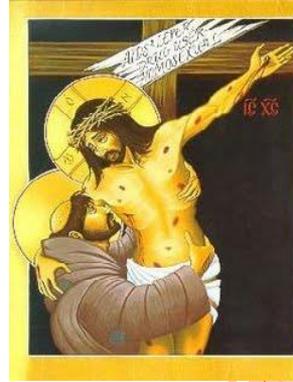
The objective

- To understand my role in moulding the faith life of the children in my care
- To adapt learning practices from hereon to the class I teach



AGENDA

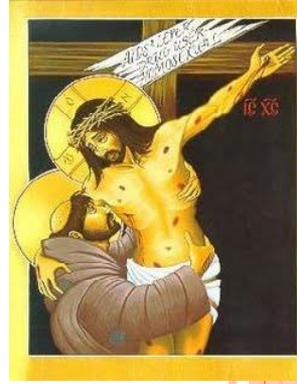
- Why catechesis?
- Purpose and role of catechesis?
- Seven Secrets of a Successful Catechist
- Q&A
- Feedback/suggestions



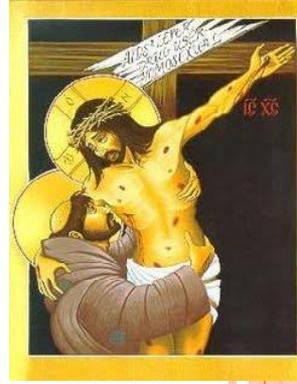
When you feel
like you're
drowning in life,
don't worry -
your Lifeguard
walks on water.

AFTER THIS MODULE I WILL...

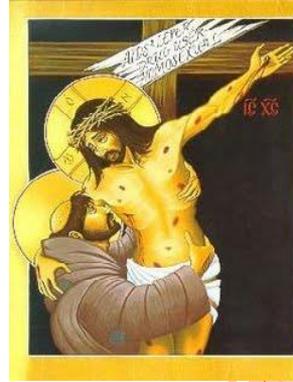
- Understand my roles and responsibilities to the children and their parents
- Focus on different teaching styles to keep it engaging for my assigned age group
- Reflect on what works for my age group



WHY CATECHESIS?



SEVEN SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL CATECHIST – JOSEPH D. WHITE, PH.D.



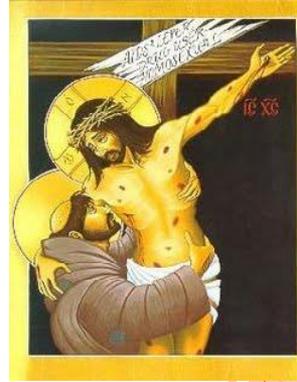
1. Dedicate your work to God
2. Learn about the characteristics of the group you teach
3. Pay attention to your own faith formation
4. Build a community
5. Accommodate differences in learning styles to make lessons fun, interesting and memorable
6. Take a positive approach to classroom discipline
7. Remember the importance of this work



SECRET 1: DEDICATE YOUR WORK TO GOD

Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

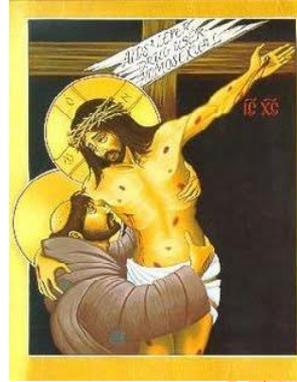
- Religious education remains God's work only till we remain open.
- Humility – he will then send us his strength and tools to do his work.
- Prayerfulness – empty ourselves to prayer, he fills us with the holy spirit to say the words we need to say.
- We need to “get ourselves out of the way” to allow him to do his work through us.



ACTIONS IN CLASS

Consider praying before you begin class that

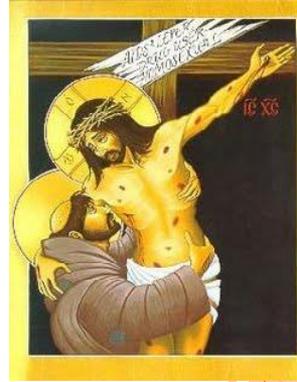
- God will lead you where he wants you to (even if its not to plan)
- Pray to the Spirit that the children will be open to hear and understand
- Pray for each child by name and special intentions for each of them



SECRET 2: KNOW THE AGE GROUP YOU TEACH

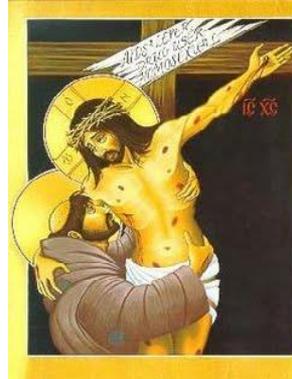
When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. 1 Corinthians 13:11

Patterns of each age group govern not only what we teach but how we teach it. This does not take away the uniqueness of each child though.

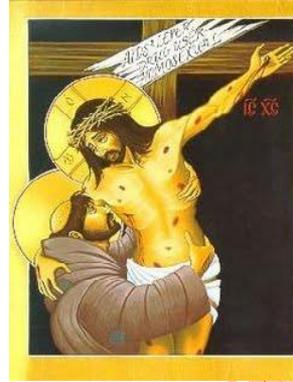


THE ACTIONS IN CLASS

- **Infants and toddlers** – sensory experiences of music and visual. They may not sit down for stories.
- **Three and four-year olds** – independent beings. They think the world thinks like them and revolves around them.
 - God's creation stories are great
 - Bible stories as it feeds their vivid imagination with parts they can act out
- **School-age children** – problem solvers.
 - Games and crossword puzzles
 - Craft projects
 - Hypothetical situations with moral points



THE ACTIONS IN CLASS



○ School-age children contd...

- Children at this age are keen on rules, so good to introduce the 10 commandments
- Challenge of concepts such as reconciliation and communion. Simplify yet make them understand that learning it as a lifelong process, rather than a one-dimensional solution. Overwhelming them is not the solution though.
- Bring same-sex teams together as they learn from you and each other.

○ Teenagers

- Seek identification among their peers and often feel misunderstood by adults.
- Therefore important to play facilitator rather than a teacher.
- Involve them in group discussions and personal reflection
- Try to answer the question “how does it apply to me?” as they seek to identify religion’s place in their life.



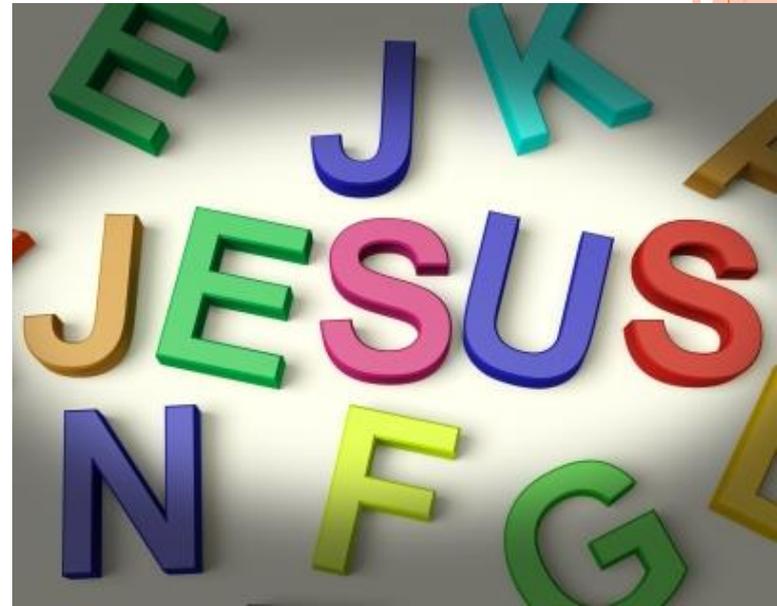
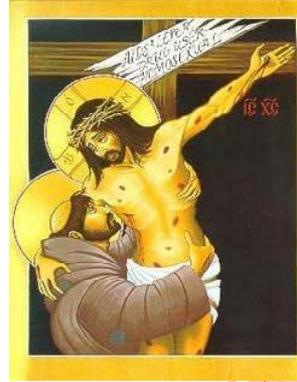
SECRET 3: PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH!

Christian life is continuing conversion.

True catechesis is not a process of “faith telling” as much as “faith sharing”.

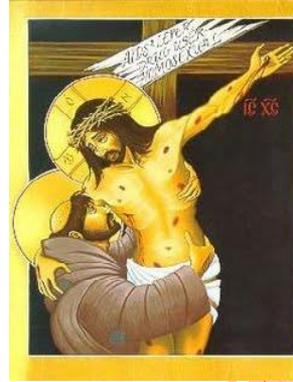
This requires some work and extra commitment.

- Wake up early or stay up late to read scripture.
- Using private time to connect with parishioners to learn more of what others know of the faith.
- Humility that we are continuously learning from childhood and that the mysteries unravel as we grow older and wiser

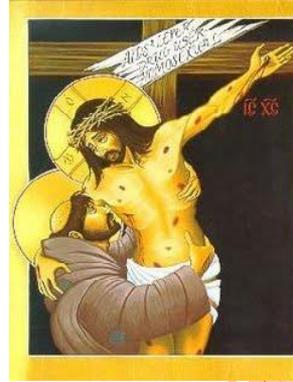


THE ACTIONS IN OUR LIVES

- Learning and understanding the CCC and Scripture
- Participating in church events
- Penance and Communion to stay connected to Jesus through this connection he has provided us.
- Prayers and types – meditative (rosary) to spontaneous
 - Praise and supplication – needs based prayer
 - Intercession – the needs of others
 - Thanksgiving
- Listening in prayer



SECRET 4: BUILD A COMMUNITY



For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.” Mt 18:20

Christianity has always been a communal religion, where we approach God as a community.

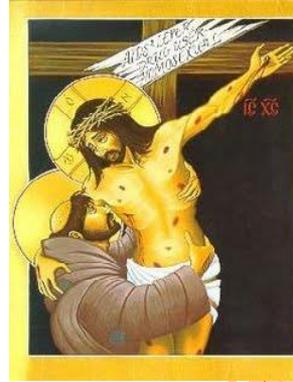
- Since the process of Christian life begins at birth and entry is ideally at the family unit, the CCC calls the family the first “domestic church.”
- Our parents are therefore partners in the catechesis of our children
- The parish is therefore the locus of the larger community of faith.



THE ACTIONS IN CLASS – WITH PARENTS

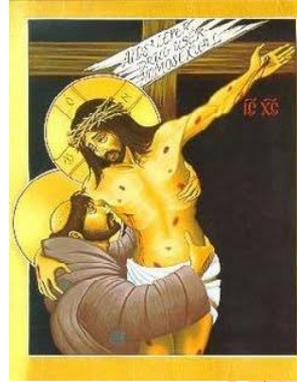
Involve the parents

- Call for an introductory meeting/open house with parents, providing some insights into yourself and what you would be covering
- Keep some activity ready for the children so you can have informal conversations with parents when they come to drop/pick their children
- Consider issuing a parents newsletter with a feedback mechanism
- Would you consider creating external events such as picnics etc?
- Send updates on what is being covered in class
- Welcome parents to sit in or assist a class



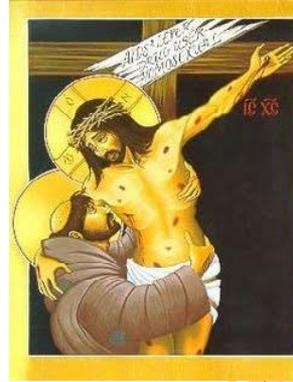
THE ACTIONS IN CLASS – WITH CHILDREN

- Allow the children to interact informally
- Do a weekly circle allowing each child to share a week's highlight that God has done for them or something that needs a prayer
- Encourage pair or group activity



SECRET 5: MAKE IT FUN!

- Christianity, from the beginning has chosen to communicate in many ways, recognising that there are many routes to a single destination – therefore music; visual arts; preaching; social service and more recently the internet.
- Although not meant to entertain, its meant to reach people such that its easy to hear and understand and retain.



THE ACTIONS IN CLASS

Mix it up

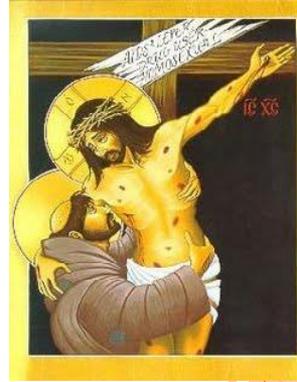
Fill the room with song.

Act it out.

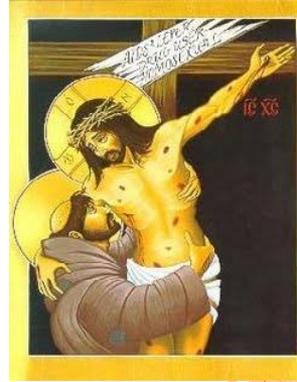
Create craft projects

Ask lots of questions

Play games



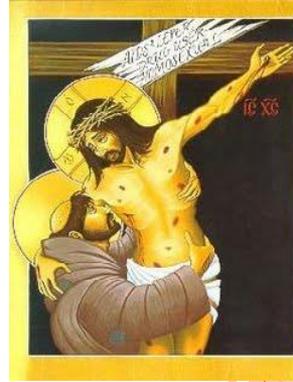
SECRET 6: TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE



There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. 1 John 4:18

A matter of style. Spontaneous vs structured? Depends on the class.





THE ACTIONS IN CLASS

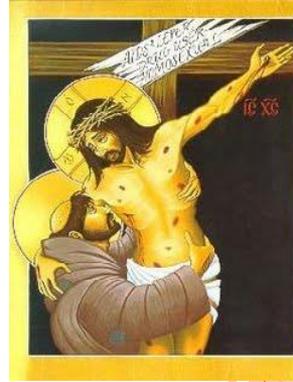
- **Set out rules** – Make a contract with the children – a positive outline so everyone sings from the same song sheet. Give frequent reminders as well.
- Positive reinforcement.

Challenging children.

- Manage short attention spans with smaller tasks broken down.
- Distracted children keep away from windows and doors with high traffic areas
- Empathise with the destructive child. He may listen once he/she realises that someone understands.
- You are not alone
 - Speak to parents and to the catechism coordinators who may be able to help you



SECRET 7: REMEMBER THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK



Parable of the seeds...Mark 4 3:8; 13 - 20

- Rocky ground
- Thorns
- Good soil

- The seeds are the Gospel or the words of Jesus Christ. How receptive we are is the type of soil the words fall on.

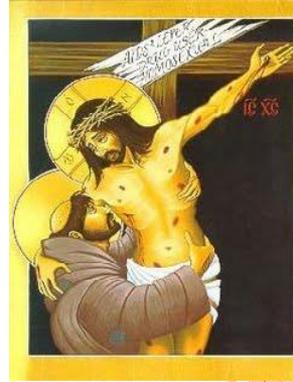
- Each child may be at different phases of the soil described above.



THE ACTIONS IN CLASS

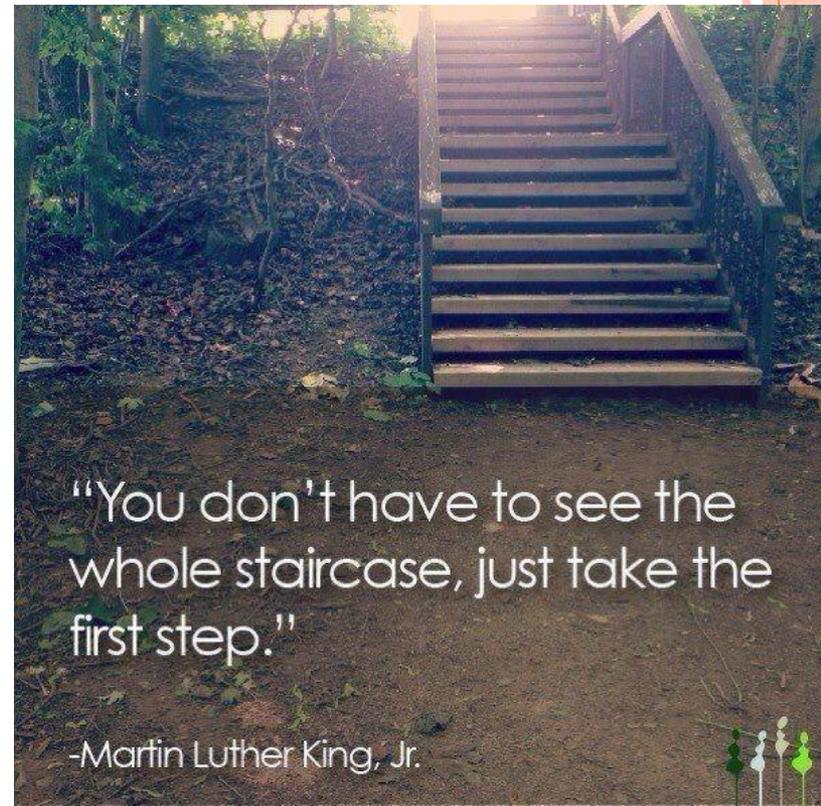
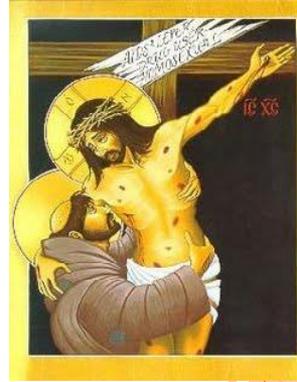
As catechists we must remember that we are only the sowers of the word.

- God's given every one free will and then it's a mysterious combination of his grace and the individual's perceptiveness that a person comes to bear the fruit of the gospel.
- Just because the seed doesn't show fruit immediately doesn't mean it will not show, its there. When it takes shape is a matter of time.



FINAL THOUGHTS

- We are humans and therefore have limited vision to the fruits of the seed we plant as catechists. That is why we work for God, not for ourselves.
- God makes all effort good to great.

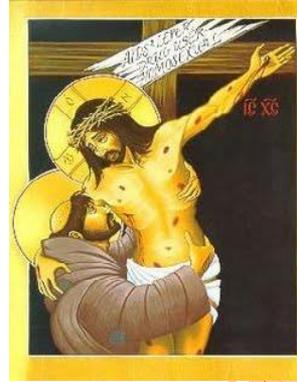


"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

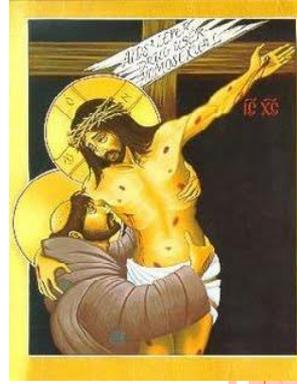
-Martin Luther King, Jr.



Q&A



IS ANYONE AWAKE?



Thank you for listening!

