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

Appropriate preparation and organization of resources

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)

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

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

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
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:**
The lesson must have a **main** focus on a theme or aim to achieve an objective. One central core idea, concept, skill, or piece of knowledge that all of the children will have learnt by the end of the lesson.
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
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.
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.
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
Should we tell the children what we’re about to LEARN in each catechism lesson?

Hopefully

Should we tell the children

..........................................................
..........................................................

YES!

THEREFORE:
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:
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.
The 4 part “ACCELERATED LEARNING” lesson structure

- **ACTIVATE**
- **DEMONSTRATE**
- **CONSOLIDATE**
- **CONNECT**

**THE LEARNING CYCLE**
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
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
  • By teaching “Active Listening”
  • Block out key words from text and ask students to speculate, by reasoning, what may be concealed

• Children demonstrating to the whole class
  • Paired talk

• 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
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
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