



Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word:

An Adult Formation Activity

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to invite adults of the parish (including parents, catechists, young adults, small Christian communities, candidates for sacraments, and parish pastoral council members) to deepen their awareness of how God reveals himself to us in Sacred Scripture and to learn how God invites us to know him and to enter more deeply into a relationship with him. This activity will also reflect on the importance of Scripture in the celebration of the liturgy and the evangelizing mission of the Church.

Materials Needed

- Tables, chairs
- Bibles (or ask participants to bring their own)
- Chalkboard
- Laptop, projector, screen (if PowerPoint presentations are used); sufficient copies of any handouts
- CD player or iPod to play appropriate religious music
- Parish hymnals
- Refreshments
- Podium
- Microphone

Schedule

Session 1 (90 minutes)

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Opening Prayer Service (10 minutes)
- Part I (30 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Part II (30 minutes)
- Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Session 2 (90 minutes)

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Opening Prayer Service (10 minutes)
- Part III (30 minutes)

Break (10 minutes)
Part IV (30 minutes)
Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Session 1

Preparation

When preparing for this activity, please read the articles “Catechesis: ‘Teaching What God Has Taught Us’” and “*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*: The Word of God in the Celebration of the Sacraments,” both of which can be found in the “Teaching Aids” section of the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010: www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday. This adult faith formation activity is based upon these articles. Also invite participants to pick up copies of these articles from the parish office, or download them from the Catechetical Sunday Web site: www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday. For the presentations in this session, prepare a PowerPoint slideshow or a handout to summarize the main points, if possible; be sure to make sufficient handouts available for participants.

Welcome (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone and make necessary announcements to help everyone feel comfortable. Briefly state the purpose and format of the session. Explain that the materials used to prepare the presentations come from the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Opening Prayer Service (10 minutes)

Prayer

Open the session with a brief prayer of your choosing.

Song

Invite the group to sing one of the following songs:

- “O Word of God,” Ricky Manalo, Oregon Catholic Press
- “Your Words Are Spirit and Life,” Bernadette Farrell, Oregon Catholic Press
- “We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” Albert Goodson, GIA Publications
- “Praise to You, O Christ Our Savior,” Bernadette Farrell, Oregon Catholic Press
- “Take the Word of God,” Christopher Walker, Oregon Catholic Press
- “The Church’s One Foundation,” Samuel Wesley, World Library Publications

Scripture Reading

Have someone in the group read a passage from Scripture, such as one of the following:

- Is 40:6-8: “The word of our God stands forever.”
- Jer 1:4-6: “The word of the Lord came to me.”
- Jn 1:6-9, 14: “And the Word became flesh.”
- Jn 17:17-19: “Your word is truth.”
- Acts 6:6-7: “The word of God continued to spread.”

- Col 3:12-16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.”
- Heb 4:12-13: “The word of God is living and effective.”
- Jas 1:19-22: “Be doers of the word.”

Additional Reading Option

A second reading from the Second Vatican Council’s *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*, no. 2, 4, or 7, would also be appropriate.

Part I (30 minutes)

Presentation (15 minutes)

Make a brief presentation that summarizes the main points from the article “Catechesis: ‘Teaching What God Has Taught Us.’” Use the PowerPoint presentation or the handout you prepared to help participants follow along. Be sure to leave time for questions after the presentation. Include the following points:

- Divine Revelation is God revealing himself and his plan for our salvation (see United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* [USCCA] [Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006], Chapter 2).
- God speaks to us through his saving deeds (the creation of the world, the call of Abraham, the Covenants of the Old Testament, the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, the Law given at Mount Sinai), and saving words (the prophets) (see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2000], nos. 50-64).
- God speaks to us through his Son (fullness of Revelation) (see CCC, nos. 65-73, and USCCA, Chapter 3).
- God’s Revelation is transmitted by Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, which are authentically interpreted by the Church’s Magisterium (see CCC, nos. 78-83, 85, and USCCA, Chapter 3).
- We desire and respond to God through faith, relationship, and commitment (see CCC, nos. 144-174).
- The Church hands on what she has received through teaching (catechesis), worship, and the life of the Church (see CCC, nos. 1-10, and USCCA, Chapter 3).

Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Have the participants divide into groups of 3 to 5 people to discuss the following questions.

- Is your knowledge of God more “head” knowledge or “heart” knowledge? Why do we need both?
- Have you experienced the saving power of God in your life? Explain.
- Do you have a favorite Scripture story? What does it reveal about God?
- Name a particular teaching of the Church that helps you know God in a deeper way.
- Recall someone in your life who passed on the faith to you. What do you remember about their sharing of the faith with you? How do you share your faith?

Ask each person in the group to share responses to these questions in the small group. If time permits, ask participants to share their responses or general impressions from the small group discussion with the larger gathering.

Break (10 minutes)

Allow time for participants to take refreshment, share with one another, and use the restrooms.

Part II (30 minutes)

Presentation (15 minutes)

Make a brief presentation that summarizes the main points from the article “*Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi: The Word of God in the Celebration of the Sacraments.*” Use the PowerPoint presentation or handout that you prepared to help participants follow along. Be sure to leave time for questions. Include the following points:

- Explain the importance of the Liturgy of the Word at the celebration of Mass and all the sacraments (see *Lectionary for Mass*, nos. 31-33).
- Relate the Word of God to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ (see USCCA, 171-172).
- Discuss the presence of Christ in the proclamation of the Word (see Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [Sacrosanctum Concilium]*, no. 7).
- Explain the structure of the Liturgy of the Word, the *Lectionary*, and the cycle of readings (see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 55-66, and *Lectionary for Mass*, nos. 11-37).
- Discuss the axiom “*lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*” (see USCCA, 175-176).
- Describe the relationship between liturgy and catechesis (see CCC, nos. 1074-1075).

Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Have the participants divide into groups of 3 to 5 people to discuss the following questions. Provide copies of the upcoming Sunday readings.

- Can you think of a time recently when the Word really came alive for you as it was proclaimed?
- Read the Scripture for the upcoming Sunday. Offer insights to connect the readings to the life of the faithful.
- Name a teaching of the Church (such as the Incarnation or the Trinity) and explain how the liturgy reinforces that teaching of our faith (for example, the Gospel procession reminds us that Christ is present among us in the Word).

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Place the Bible or Book of the Gospels on a stand covered with fabric where participants can approach and reverence the Sacred Scripture. Then read the following prayer:

Leader: God, you speak to us in this sacred book.
Your Word gives life, calls us to discipleship,
and feeds us on the journey.
May we be formed by this Word and preach it with our lives.
Let us reverence the Word of God as we come forward
and touch the Sacred Scripture.

Play music as people come forward.

Leader: Heavenly Father,
We encounter you in your Son, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,
who give us ears to hear, lives to respond,
and voices to proclaim the Good News of salvation.
Let this Good News echo throughout the world,
in every tongue and culture,
so all people may gladly embrace salvation
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Session 2

Preparation

When preparing for this activity, please read the articles “What Does Evangelization Look Like? Mind the Gap” and “The Great Commission: *Ad Gentes*,” both of which can be found in the “Teaching Aids” section of the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010: www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday. This activity is based upon these articles. These articles may be copied and distributed by the parish office, or participants may download them from the Catechetical Sunday Web site: www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday. For the presentations in this session, prepare a PowerPoint slideshow or a handout to summarize the main points, if possible; be sure to make sufficient handouts available for participants.

Welcome (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone and make necessary announcements to help all feel comfortable. Briefly state the purpose and format of the session. Explain that the materials used to prepare the presentations come from the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Opening Prayer Service (10 minutes)

Open the session with a brief prayer service. See the suggestions in Session I.

Part III (30 minutes)

Presentation (15 minutes)

Make a brief presentation that summarizes the main points from the article “What Does Evangelization Look Like? Mind the Gap.” Use the PowerPoint presentation or the handout you prepared to help participants follow along. Be sure to leave time for questions. Include the following points in your presentation:

- Evangelization is a central mission of the Church and the mission of all baptized Catholics (see Pope Paul VI, *Evangelization in the Modern World [Evangelii Nuntiandi]*, no. 14).
- Evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself (see USCCB, *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, 10th anniversary ed. [Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002], no. 10).
- The Good News is God’s constant love, the Incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, the Kingdom of God, the gift of salvation, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Evangelization is fourfold: accepting God’s Word into one’s life, living that Word through service, proclaiming the Word, and inviting others to deepen their relationship with Christ.
- Evangelization is not a program but a way of life. It takes place at any time, in any place, under any circumstance.
- The recipients of evangelization fall into several categories: active Catholics, inactive Catholics, those with no faith community, and all people.
- The fruits of evangelization are changed lives and a changed world—holiness and justice, spirituality and peace (see *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 18).

Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Have the participants divide into groups of 3 to 5 people to discuss the following questions:

- According to a 2008 report from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), 54 percent of Catholics who say they are proud to be Catholic do not attend Mass each Sunday. Do we *blame* them for being “lazy,” or do we *miss* them?
- Name several ways that you can personally reach out to inactive Catholics. Name several ways that your parish can reach out to inactive Catholics.
- Evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every situation. How do we, as Fr. Bransfield puts it in his article, “transform our experience into knowledge and then into an experience laden with the mystery of Christ”?
- Pope John Paul II referred to the New Evangelization as re-evangelizing active Catholics. How can we be transformed by the Sunday Scripture?

After time for small group discussion, invite participants to share some of their ideas with the larger group.

Break (10 minutes)

Allow time for participants to take refreshment, share thoughts with one another, and use the restroom.

Part IV (30 minutes)

Presentation (15 minutes)

Make a brief presentation that summarizes the main points from the article “The Great Commission: *Ad Gentes*.” Use the PowerPoint presentation or the handout you prepared to help participants follow along. Be sure to leave time for questions. Include the following points:

- Discuss the Second Vatican Council’s *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes Divinitus)*.
- Describe the origin and purpose of mission in the Church (see CCC, nos. 849-856).
- Explain the difference between “mission” and “missions” in the Church.
- Discuss the call of all Christians to witness and proclaim Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
- Identify local missionary societies and describe their work.

Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Have the participants divide into groups of 3 to 5 people to discuss the following questions:

- Review the “Stories Abound” section of the article “The Great Commission: *Ad Gentes*.” What particular message inspires you?
- In the same article, the section “Resources and Activities” contains a practical checklist for personal awareness and catechetical ideas. Do any of these ideas appeal to you personally or for your parish?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Use the prayer from the close of Session I.