



# Opening of the Year In-Service for Catechists and Catholic School Teachers

The purpose of this in-service is to acquaint the catechist and Catholic school teacher with an understanding of two important topics: Revelation as the foundation of faithful catechesis, and divine pedagogy as the model for catechetical instruction. Participants will also learn to recognize inductive and deductive catechetical methods in a curricular resource.

## Materials Needed

- Tables and chairs, arranged for groups of 4 to 6 participants
- Table with refreshments
- One smaller table to be used as a prayer setting
- Book stand, covered with a colorful or liturgically appropriate cloth, for Bible or Lectionary
- Two candles, to be placed on either side of the enthroned Scriptures
- Flip chart and markers
- Overhead projector, or equipment for a PowerPoint presentation
- Musical instrument for accompanying the cantor, or tape or CD player and appropriate religious music
- Copies of the program for the opening prayer service and the schedule for the in-service
- Copies of the article “Catechesis: Teaching What God Has Taught Us,” by Fr. Robert A. Pesarchick, STD, downloaded from the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010: [www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday](http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday)
- Podium or small table for the presenter
- Microphone, if needed
- Sufficient copies of any handouts

## Schedule

Welcome (5 minutes)

Opening Prayer Service (15 minutes)

Presentation: Revelation as the Foundation of Faithful Catechesis (35-40 minutes)

Break (10-20 minutes)

Curricular Activity (15 minutes)

Evaluation (5-7 minutes)

## Preparation

When preparing this in-service, please read Fr. Robert A. Pesarchick's article "Catechesis: 'Teaching What God Has Taught Us,'" which can be found in the "Teaching Aids" section of the online resources for Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010: [www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday](http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday). This in-service is based on Fr. Pesarchick's article.

Before the in-service, the following steps will help you prepare:

- Select a prayer leader, 1 or 2 readers, and a cantor.
- Provide the leader, readers, and cantor with the appropriate materials ahead of time so they can prepare their readings and songs.
- Create the handout for the prayer service, and make copies for all participants.
- When you set up the room where the in-service will be held, prepare the prayer table by placing the cloth over the table with the book stand that will hold the Bible or Lectionary. The prayer table should be set away from the podium but be in a prominent location in the room, visible to all participants.
- For the presentation in this in-service, prepare a PowerPoint slideshow or a handout to summarize the main points, if possible. Be sure to make sufficient handouts available for participants.
- If desired, create a handout for the closing evaluation and make sufficient copies.

On the day of the in-service, have copies of the schedule and prayer service (and any handouts) available at the door as participants sign in. Have appropriate instrumental or religious music playing as participants gather.

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### Welcome (5 minutes)

When it is time to begin the in-service, welcome everyone. Explain the purpose of the workshop, and review the schedule. If certification is available for the day, explain the procedure for obtaining the credit. Also 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 (15 minutes)

#### **Gathering Hymn**

Begin the prayer service with a song from the suggestions provided for the Closing Hymns, or choose another with an appropriate theme.

#### **Opening Prayer**

After the gathering hymn has concluded, continue with the following prayer:

*Leader:* In the name of the Father . . . *(All make the Sign of the Cross.)*

Lord, let your Scriptures be our delight!  
Perfect us and reveal the truth and wisdom of these mysteries to us!  
We rejoice in your Word.  
Give us what we desire.  
May the inner secrets of your Word be laid open to us when we knock.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.  
Amen.

***First Reading***

*One of the readers now proclaims the first reading, 1 John 1:1-3.*

*Reader:* A reading from the first letter of St. John.

What was from the beginning,  
what we have heard,  
what we have seen with our eyes,  
what we looked upon  
and touched with our hands  
concerns the Word of life—  
for the life was made visible;  
we have seen it and testify to it  
and proclaim to you the eternal life  
that was with the Father and was made visible to us—  
what we have seen and heard  
we proclaim now to you,  
so that you too may have fellowship with us;  
for our fellowship is with the Father  
and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

*All:* Thanks be to God.

***Psalm Response***

*Continue with a responsorial psalm. An appropriate psalm is Psalm 19, "Lord, You Have the Words," with music by David Haas (GIA, 1983).*

If musicians are not available, use Psalm 78:1-7, below, as a spoken psalm.

*Reader:* The response is:

**R/.** Attend, my people, to my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.

All repeat the response.

*Reader:* I will open my mouth in story,  
drawing lessons from of old. **R/.**

We have heard them, we know them;  
our ancestors have recited them to us.  
We do not keep them from our children;  
we recite them to the next generation. **R/.**

The praiseworthy and mighty deeds of the LORD,  
the wonders that he performed. **R/.**

God set up a decree in Jacob,  
established a law in Israel:  
What he commanded our ancestors,  
they were to teach their children. **R/.**

That the next generation might come to know,  
children yet to be born.  
In turn they were to recite them to their children,  
that they too might put their trust in God,  
And not forget the works of God,  
keeping his commandments. **R/.**

### ***Gospel Reading***

One of the readers now proclaims the Gospel, John 1:1-5.

*Reader:* A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God.

All things came to be through him,  
and without him nothing came to be.  
What came to be through him was life,  
and this life was the light of the human race;  
the light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Gospel of the Lord.

*All:* Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*After the proclamation of the Gospel, pause for a brief period of silent reflection.*

### **Concluding Prayers**

*Invite the participants to rise and recite together the Our Father, using the following introduction or other appropriate words.*

*Leader:* Let us now rise and pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

*All:* Our Father . . .

*If you choose, after the Our Father you may invite those gathered to share the sign of peace with one another. Bring the prayer service to an end with the following closing prayer and blessing.*

*Leader:* May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of glory, give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him.

And may the eyes of our hearts be enlightened, that we may know the hope that belongs to his call, and the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones.

*(Conclude by making the Sign of the Cross.)* May almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and bring us to life everlasting.

### **Closing Hymn**

*After the closing prayer, sing one of the following suggested hymns, or choose another with a similar theme.*

Psalm 19: "Lord, You Have the Words" (David Haas, GIA, 1983)

"Go Make of All Disciples" (Leon M. Adkins, Abdingdon Press, 1955, 1964; available in GIA's *Worship*)

"As a Fire Is Meant for Burning" (Ruth Duck, GIA, 1992)

"The Word of Life" (John L. Bell, Iona Community, GIA, 1987)

- “Praise to You, O Christ Our Savior” (Bernadette Farrell, OCP, 1986)
- “The Word Is in Your Heart” (Bob Moore, GIA, 1993)
- “How Shall They Hear the Word of God” (Michael Perry, Hope Publishing, 1980)
- “Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service” (Albert Bayly, Oxford University Press)

## **Presentation: Revelation as the Foundation of Faithful Catechesis (35-40 minutes)**

### **Introduction (3-4 minutes)**

Begin your presentation on Revelation and catechesis with a reflective question.

*Leader:* When you desire to be understood by a friend, spouse, or loved one, what sorts of things do you think are important to share with them? Take a minute or two to jot down some essentials about you and your life that are vital for forming a close relationship with you. How does this knowledge affect your relationships?

Pause to give those gathered a moment for personal reflection.

*Leader:* Now think about our relationship with God. How do we come to know who God is and what kind of relationship God invites us into? What difference does this make in our lives?

Use these questions about our relationship with God as a springboard into your presentation on the article “Catechesis: Teaching What God Has Taught Us.” Use the PowerPoint presentation or the handout you prepared to help participants follow along. In your presentation, focus on the points outlined in the three sections below: “Part 1: Evangelization and Catechesis,” “Part 2: Revelation as God’s Self-Communication in Time and History,” and “Part 3: Catechesis and the Divine Pedagogy.”

### **Part 1: Evangelization and Catechesis (12-15 minutes)**

In the first part of your presentation, focus on the *relationship between evangelization and catechesis*. Specifically, note the following points:

- God has created human beings with a supernatural vocation to share in divine life.
- The Church is an organically structured communion created by God to be a sacrament of salvation.
- The Church’s vertical communion with the Trinity, brought about by the Eucharist, creates horizontal communion among the members of Church.
- The Church is intrinsic to the salvation of the human race.
- An act of faith comes through hearing the Word of God.
- The missionary mandate of Jesus Christ is a fundamental mission of the Church.
- “Catechesis” refers to the total process of making disciples and imparting the teaching of God’s Word.
- The source of catechesis is found in the Word of God, revealed by Jesus Christ.
- The catechist’s passing on of God’s teaching should be founded on God’s own pedagogy in his self-revelation in history.

After you finish this part of the presentation, allow some time for comments and questions from participants.

Next, ask participants to jot down some ideas about how they might respond to someone who tells them, “I have no need of the Church or any organized religion. I commune with God through nature. I experience the divine presence when I gaze on a sunset, or the majesty of the mountains, or the vastness of the sea.”

Invite participants to share their responses with those at their table, and then ask each table to share with the larger group their thoughts about how to helpfully respond. As you discuss the responses, highlight those that call attention to divine initiative and God’s desire for communion with human beings.

**Part 2: Revelation as God’s Self-Communication in Time and History (14 Minutes)**

Continue your presentation with an account of how Revelation is God’s self-communication to human beings in time and history. The first part of this account should focus on the *nature of Divine Revelation*. Be sure to make the following points:

- Creation provides a true but incomplete knowledge of a personal God.
- God revealed himself definitively in Jesus, his Son, so that we would have communion with him.
- Revelation happened gradually over the course of history, in words and deeds that are intrinsically connected with one another.
- The process of Revelation involved three types of witness: oral witness, written witness, and communal tradition.
- Revelation occurred in several stages. It began with the first humans. It continued in the history of Israel, both through the Covenants and in the teachings of Israel’s leaders and prophets. Finally, Revelation reached fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- God’s self-disclosure reaches its fullness in Jesus, true God and true man.
- All other stages of Revelation should be interpreted, and can be understood, only in light of the fullness of Revelation in Christ.

Pause here for comments and questions.

Invite one of your readers to read for a second time the Prologue from the Gospel of John (1:1-5). Afterward, pause briefly for a moment of quiet reflection, and then ask participants to reflect on a word or phrase from the Prologue that resonates with them. Invite them to share that word or phrase out loud.

Thank participants for their sharing and continue with the presentation. Inform them that now that you have talked about the nature of Revelation, you will now be moving on to talk about the *transmission of Divine Revelation*. Focus on the following points:

- The Holy Spirit guides the transmission of the deposit of Divine Revelation under the authority of the Church’s Magisterium.



- The books of the Old Testament provide the written expression of the provisional stages of God’s self-revelation, stages that culminate in the person and mission of Jesus Christ.
- The New Testament writings are the expression of the apostolic preaching and tradition. These writings transmit Jesus Christ’s words and deeds, which bring God’s self-revelation to completion.
- Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church together form the one deposit of God’s Revelation, entrusted to the Church by the Apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The Tradition of the Church encompasses the “doctrine, life, and worship” of the Church.
- Catechists must be aware of the historical character of God’s Revelation as progressing in stages leading to fullness in Jesus Christ.
- The Church’s understanding develops in time under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The development of doctrine entails deeper insights into the deposit of Revelation.
- The Word of God—contained and transmitted in Sacred Scripture and Tradition and interpreted by the Magisterium—is the principal source for catechesis.

After you finish speaking, ask one of your readers to read the Prologue from the Gospel of John (1:1-5) for the third time. Allow a brief period of reflection, and then ask catechists to share any part of the reading that was meaningful, instructive, or formative for them.

**Part 3: Catechesis and the Divine Pedagogy (7 minutes)**

Now move on to the concluding section of your presentation, relating the task of the catechist to the divine pedagogy. Make the following points:

- Catechesis has a twofold objective: deepening the catechumen’s initial conversion, and educating disciples so they can grow into a more complete and systematic knowledge of the person and mission of Jesus Christ.
- Catechesis needs to attend to God’s methodology, as well as God’s Word.
- Catechetical methodology must reflect the divine pedagogy of progressive unfolding in its process of educating believers in the faith and helping them mature.
- God uses all human actions, gestures, and conduct—in fact, all aspects of human existence—to communicate the mystery of his innermost existence.
- Because God makes use of all aspects of human existence, catechesis must attend to the concrete realities of human existence and employ them as it seeks to impart a deeper understanding of faith in Christ.
- Catechesis must use both *inductive* and *deductive* approaches.
- Catechists must find a language capable of communicating the Word of God and the creed of the Church in the various circumstances of those who hear it.

Conclude your presentation by reading the following quotation from *The Prophetic Spirit of Catechesis*, by Sr. Anne Marie Mongoven, OP, who describes the role of the catechist in the proclamation of the Word: “The catechist is a bridge and a prophet who announces what the Church has seen and heard in the past, and calls on the catechized to open their eyes and ears to see and to hear what God has done and is doing for us now. The catechist reminds the catechized that we are all called to live in communion with the Divine Mystery” (*The Prophetic Spirit of Catechesis* [Mahwah, NJ]: Paulist Press, 2000], 90).



Ask the participants to reflect on this quotation and ask themselves who has served as a bridge or prophet to them as they have grown in faith. How did that person do that? How might each of them be a bridge or prophet?

### **Break (10-20 minutes)**

Break for 10-20 minutes, depending on needs of the group.

### **Curricular Activity (15 minutes)**

Depending on the size of the group and time available, this activity can be done in table groups or in a large group using transparencies and overhead projector or PowerPoint.

Select a sample lesson plan from the curricular resource used by the catechists at your parish or school. Apply concepts from Fr. Pesarchick's article to the lesson, for example, by identifying catechetical approaches in the lesson that are deductive and those that are inductive.

Invite participants at tables to do the same sort of analysis with other lesson plans from the curricular resource that they will be using.

Invite tables to share their findings with the larger group.

Conclude the in-service with a discussion in the large group. Ask the participants this question: "What values do you perceive in using both inductive and deductive methods in your lessons?"

### **Evaluation (5-7 minutes)**

At the end of the in-service, ask the participants to complete a brief evaluation. This evaluation can be printed on a handout for the participants to complete and turn in to the leader at the end of the gathering. Alternatively, the questions can be put on PowerPoint slide or transparency, and responses can be shared in the large group. For either option, the evaluation should include the following prompts:

1. One insight I now have regarding the importance of Revelation in my role as a catechist:
2. One way that this workshop will affect my ministry this year is:
3. One thing that would have made this workshop a better learning experience for me:

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