The following series will look at those we catechize—inspired by the National Directory for Catechesis. We will continue grades 4 through 6!

An Age of Discovery:
Catechesis for Early Adolescence in the Middle School
Grades of 7th and 8th by Bryan Reising

Early adolescence is a time for discovery of one’s self amidst changes within the body, biological drive, expansion in thinking abilities, and new awareness of social roles. Regarding faith formation, it is a time where these young people are discovering how they fit in with God, the Church, values, and claiming a sense of belief and morals for themselves.

Discovering God
At an age where questioning everything is just the beginning of the adolescent journey, young adolescents do ask relevant questions about God. They are trying to discover a God who loves them as they are. They long to be accepted by their peers, but knowing that God does accept them unconditionally can be a turning point in them accepting themselves – their personality, their awkward feelings, and their giftedness. Parents and catechists can be instrumental in helping these young teens understand that there is someone who loves them and wants to guide them every step of the way. Yes, parents can let children know that they love and care for them – and it is important for teens to hear that—but there is someone else who loves them no matter what. That someone is God.

Discovering the Church and Its Teachings
Within the parish’s catechetical formation, the young teen needs time to ask questions regarding the faith. There also needs to be ample time for prayer and community building – especially with their peers, learning the faith, and involvement with acts of charity. What can make the difference? Involved parents who go to church every weekend, who are active in parish life, and who establish prayer and faith traditions in the home are the most...
influential mentors for their own sons and daughters. Catechists who are well trained and know how to work with this age group—which includes patient perseverance—can be instrumental. The right curriculum can make a difference as well. Most curriculums that are on the conformity listing do a great job of looking at the development of early adolescents and how they learn. Special note to the following: Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division, Sadlier, RCLBenziger, Loyola Press, and St. Mary’s Press have some great options for faith formation, including extra options on their websites. Lifeteen’s The Edge is a great process to reach out to and teach the faith to this age group. Regarding curriculum, the following list are those approved by the USCCB: [link]

Discovering the Faith and Morality as One’s Own
The key to this age group is to help these young people to claim the faith and moral lessons and values as their own. How? By getting to know each student. What makes them tick? What are their interests and passions? Parents and catechists are encouraged to attend their sporting events, their dance and music recitals, their plays, and other events that highlight their gifts. Then knowing who they are and what their talents are, the parents and catechists can connect the dots on why faith is important in their life, why morality and values can really help them to make good choices. The key is: it has to be relevant to them.

Young adolescents in middle school or junior high are at a great age as they discover themselves in relationship to their God and their Church. Let us help them to claim this wonderful faith and claim the values and morals that the faith sheds light upon!

Parish Catechesis Question
Which curriculum do you use for Grades 7 and 8? What are the advantages of this curriculum? What extra activities have you done for this age group that is successful? This feedback is very important as you look at your curriculum for all grades. You will have the opportunity to compare your curriculum with others when you visit the diocese and for our Curriculum Day in the spring (April 25, 2018). E-mail Bryan with your answers: breising@dioceseofbmt.org

Upcoming Opportunities

Parish Visits
Bryan has been on the road for some parish visits. He can visit on the day of your Faith Formation. He can also do visits with pastors and catechetical leaders. Please arrange a time that you can invite him to your parish by contacting him via email: breising@dioceseofbmt.org or calling his office at 409-924-4323. He will not get to all places during the catechetical year, but he would like to get to all regions of the diocese. In addition, Twyla (North, West Vicariates), Sr. Misty (East, South, and Central Vicariates), and Paul are available for parish visits as well.
What will happen with these visits? The following are some possibilities: an observation of your faith formation during the time of instruction, perhaps an in-service with your catechists, or even a catechetical
presentation – guest catechist for adults, youth, or children.

**University of Dayton’s (VLCFF)**

**Virtual Learning Community For Faith Formation**

**Cycle 1, 2019: January 20 - February 23, 2019**
(Registration: Opens Oct 24, 2018; Closes Jan 16)

- A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry
- Administration in Ministry
- Advanced Catholic Social Teaching
- Autism in Faith Formation (SN 4)
- Bible Basics
- Catholic Beliefs
- Catholic Teaching on Chastity, Family Life, and Human Sexuality Education
- Christology
- Church History 1
- Disabilities in Parish Life: An Overview (SN 1)
- Ecclesiology: Beginnings of the Church
- Faith and Human Development
- Foundations and Vision for Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 1)
- Foundations for Liturgy
- Images of Jesus
- Introduction to Catechesis
- Introduction to Christian Morality
- Introduction to Liturgy
- Introduction to Paul’s Life and Letters
- Introduction to Practical Morality
- Introduction to Prayer
- Introduction to Scripture
- Leadership Roles and Skills for Adult Learning and Faith Formation (AFL 5)
- Marianist Studies: Community
- Marianist Studies: Mary, Holy Possibility
- New Testament
- Old Testament
- Our Hearts Were Burning
- Pastoral Letter: Blessed are the Merciful
- Planning Youth Ministry Events
- RCIA
- Sacrament of Marriage: A Holy Calling

- **Sacraments (Bryan Reising, facilitator)**
- Study of The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)
- Survey of Catholic Doctrine
- Survey of Catholic Social Teaching
- Vocation to Ministry
- Vocation, Spirituality and Discipleship of Catechists

**Adult Faith Formation**

**Word on Fire**: Bishop Robert Barron adult faith formation series - https://www.wordonfire.org/
And check out the new resource of Word on Fire Engage: https://engage.wordonfire.org/about

**Formed.org** is a subscription service by parish that includes adult faith formation offerings, movies, and podcasts, and eBooks: https://formed.org/

**ACTS**

Adoration · Community · Theology · Service

To find out about upcoming ACTS Retreat and Activities: https://beaumontacts.org/

**Interested in a Bachelors or Masters in Theology**

**Theology Matters**

St. Thomas University in Houston:
https://www.stthom.edu/Academics/School-of-Arts-and-Sciences/Undergraduate/Theology/Index.agf
National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership

All PCLs are now members of NCCL! Check out the Web site: www.nccl.org. Contact our office to learn how you can be a member of NCCL compliments of the Diocese of Beaumont if you are not a member yet! For information on the national conference (Orange County, CA: May 19-May 23, 2019), go to www.nccl.org

Safe Environment Compliance Reminders

The deadline to return the reporting forms to the diocese, along with the form noting children’s attendance and absence is December 14, 2018. If you have any concerns about the deadline please contact Sr. Esther. edunegan@dioceseofbmt.org

An opt-out form called Keeping Kids Safe is available in both English and Spanish. This is provided to the parent/guardian who prefers to do their own Safe Environment training of their children. This form must be signed and returned before your training in the fall.

In signing the opt-out form, the parent/guardian is agreeing to train their own child. Use the opt-out form provided by the diocese. Do not change the content of the form. Any opt-out forms signed by the parent/guardian should be turned in to you before the training in the fall.

Any PCL, youth minister, catechist, adults helping with youth ministry, or anyone who may be in a ministry with minors is required to be in total compliance with safe environment requirements.

To be in compliance, one must have attended in person a Protecting God’s Children (PGC) session. After 5 years from the initial training participation, a rectification is required. This can be done either through the diocesan website online module, or by attending another in person PGC session.

If you have any questions regarding Safe Environment Training, you may contact the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator through the following information:

Paul J Thomas
pthomas@dioceseofbmt.org
409-924-4315

Upcoming Protecting God’s Children sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. November 12, 2018</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Lamar University, Catholic Student Center, Beaumont</td>
<td>Kelly de la Rosa</td>
<td>Kelly: 409-924-4360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri. November 16, 2018</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Catholic Pastoral Center, Assembly Hall, Beaumont</td>
<td>Paul Thomas</td>
<td>Joseph: 409-924-4309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. January 14, 2019</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>St. Francis, Orange</td>
<td>Jonnie Broussard</td>
<td>Jackie: 409-882-4453</td>
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</tbody>
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Remember to abide by all the deadlines for Safe Environment. Thank you!
In Catholic Social Teaching, we call *charity* and *justice* the 2 feet of love in action. Charity addresses the immediate need that a person may be lacking. Justice addresses the long-term underlying cause of that need with the intent of transformation. We call these the 2 feet because, step by step, as Disciples of Christ we have an obligation to reach out completely to one another in moments of need. We can help fill an immediate need through works of charity; or, make an effort to alleviate the social causes that create these deficiencies through the work of justice.

My guess is that most of us are more familiar with the works of charity. A ministry that gives groceries to the hungry through a food pantry is an example of this. Another example of this would be a homeless outreach group providing basics to people with no shelter. The work of charity tends to give us that quick “feel good” experience of *hands on* helping. Justice, on the other hand, can be a long term and tedious effort to transform social structures that do not reflect the mercy of God.

Charity allows the giver to see the fruit of their efforts more quickly. The compassion we feel towards someone in need turns into the good deed that brings comfort and hope in a very short period. Charity, as one of the 2 feet of love, is indispensable in Christian living. Unfortunately, many of us stop there. Without taking the other step of Justice, we could find ourselves hopping around on just one foot!

When compassion moves us to go deeper into the causes of human suffering, we are reminded of the adage, “Give someone a fish and they eat for a day; teach someone to fish and they eat for a lifetime.” The work of justice seeks to root out and change the causes that jeopardize human life and dignity. In an attempt to address the source, Justice is compassion that is willing to go the distance in reaching out to alleviate the suffering of others.

No one of us can do it all. The 2 feet of love in action, charity and justice, is a community effort. The important thing to know is true witnesses of Christ must do something. In addition, if you find yourself reflecting more deeply than usual in your works of charity, it may be the Spirit leading you to take the next step from compassion to justice.
Evangelization for Catechists

By Twyla Satterthwaite

Evangelization is a phrase we hear a lot today. It can be overwhelming to us. How can we evangelize others, what do we say, how do we do it? Catechists are called to share Good News; but what actually is the Good News? How do we explain it to people in a way that makes sense in their lives? Recently I read a list of transformative aspects of the Gospel. This list is a good tool for Catechists to use for evangelization.

1. **God is not an absent Father**

2. **There’s nothing to be afraid of.**

3. **God brings justice and righteousness.**

4. **Jesus is a big deal**

5. **We are a big deal too**

6. **It only gets better from here.**

**God is not an absent Father.** God is actively involved in our lives. God is present to you and loves you unconditionally. Our students need to know about this God who is with us. They are exposed to many other views of God, sometimes on the internet and sometimes from misinformed adults. God is love and knows only love. There is no other expression of God. His involvement in our lives is total. WE ARE NOT ALONE!

**There is nothing to be afraid of.** Our God saves us from fear and the darkness of uncertainty. St. Paul says in Romans 8: 38-39: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” What can we fear if God is for us? Most adolescents do not have the life experiences that prove to them that all things work for the good of those who love the Lord. As catechists, we need to share with them trust in God’s providence and not fear the future. It is all good!

**God brings justice and righteousness.** In our culture justice is seen as the bad getting punished. God’s justice is much more than that. His justice is a restorative justice, not a punishing justice. Actions do have consequences and we experience the results of our choices. If you step in front of a truck you will be run over. This experience of the natural outcome of a choice is not God’s justice; it is a fact of physics. God’s perfect justice heals and brings all involved to happiness. Most of our students see justice as what is “fair”. It’s more tit-for-tat for them. If you hit me, I will hit you and we are even. Catechists have the task to help their students realize that God’s justice takes time. It is not immediate. Hearts take time to change and to heal. Faith in God’s way will bring his justice. God wants us all to be healed and live in joy.
Jesus is a big deal. Jesus is the perfect revelation of who God is and what God expects of us. There is no “angry” God of the Old Testament and “nice” Jesus of the New Testament. There is only one God and he is perfectly revealed in Jesus. Our God became flesh to show us in no uncertain terms how we are to live our lives and how we are to treat one another. Jesus said to love God with your whole heart and soul and to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other way. It’s pretty simple what we are to do. There have always been competing teachings about who Jesus is. Some have said that he’s a great prophet or a gifted teacher, but not the Son of God. Our students are exposed to this much more than we were. So it is our duty to teach them clearly who Jesus is: THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

We are a big deal too. In Mark’s gospel Jesus tells his followers to take the Good News unto the ends of the earth. Jesus entrusted the building of the kingdom to us. We are co-creators of the Kingdom of God. This is our great commission. We are not passive bystanders or victims of a world in chaos. We are to continue the mission of Jesus to reveal God to the world. How we live and how we act make a difference. This is not a cartoon or a video game. This is reality. What we do counts; it matters. We are important and have an important message. Our students need to hear that they are entrusted by God to make the kingdom visible where they live. We are the visible Body of Christ.

It only gets better from here. Now that we have heard the Good News we are on a path to perfect joy. Nothing can take the knowledge of the love of God from us. Life may get difficult. We may suffer unknown events but we still know God. This knowledge will never leave us. All things do work for the good of those who love the Lord. Catechists should share this joy filled fact with their students. The peace that comes from knowing God’s love will guide all of us to total union with a loving God.

Evangelization is our calling and the Good News is our message. So, share the Good News, change some lives, heal some broken hearts and be the Body of Christ to the world. You are a Catechist.