

Quick Start for Catechists

This workshop provides a three-hour video orientation to the catechetical ministry and to the *Faith First Legacy Edition* for your catechists. The workshop is divided into four parts. You can offer these parts as four separate workshops or combine them into a single half-day event.

Workshop Materials

- *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States* (1979)
- Copies of the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005)
- *Faith First Legacy Edition* awareness video
- “QuickStart” video
- Catechist guide and student book for each catechist
- Blackline activity master worksheets (pages 69–72)
- Nametags

Preparation Checklist

- Set a workshop date several months in advance.
- Choose a team to assist you.
- Remind catechists by mail and/or phone before the event.
- Familiarize yourself with the workshop materials and session plan.
- Check your video equipment and preview the videos at least a week in advance.
- Arrange for refreshments. (Provide attractive alternatives for dieters.)
- Plan for a cantor or musician to assist at the session prayer services if possible.



- Arrive in sufficient time for room setup and to prepare refreshments. Have workshop packets available for each participant.
- Have extra writing paper and pens available for those who may forget them.
- Set up a display of all *Faith First Legacy Edition* components and a selection of useful resources from your resource library.

Workshop Environment

- **Prayer Center.** Place a prayer center at the heart of the workshop space that reflects the liturgical season. The first lesson in every *Faith First* grade includes an enthronement of the Scriptures. Model this ritual in the opening prayer for this workshop.
- **Seating Arrangement.** Arrange tables and chairs so that catechists can face one another during workshop discussions. Simple thematic centerpieces will communicate to all the importance of environment.
- **Comfort.** Adjust lighting and room temperature for comfort. Make sure that the meeting room can be sufficiently darkened for optimal video viewing.
- **Hospitality.** Provide an attractively arranged hospitality table.

Session Plan **Three-hour model**

You can shorten the workshop time by twenty minutes by deleting the awareness video viewing in part 1 of the workshop. Instead, set up a VCR and monitor and a display of *Faith First Legacy Edition* components in a classroom space and invite catechists to drop by and examine the print components there and view the awareness video at the parish or at home. You should have received this video with your *Faith First Legacy Edition* sample pack.

20 minutes Introduction

- **Welcome.** Greet catechists as they arrive. Give them nametags, workshop packets, and the student book and catechist guide for their grade levels.
- **Begin on time.** Seat catechists with others near their own grade level at tables of no more than six people.
- **Pray.** Because of the centrality of the Word of God in the ministry of catechesis, begin with a service of enthronement of the Scriptures. Prayerfully lead the service as outlined on the prayer sheet. (See page 62.)
- **Break the ice.** Greet your catechists. Then invite them to write in the corners of their nametags key words that represent two well-known and two little-known facts about themselves. Then divide the group into pairs and have each pair use the name tag facts to get acquainted. Have the catechists introduce their partners to the large group or to their table groups if a very large number of catechists is present.

Part 1 Orientation **30 minutes** to *Faith First*

Note: If catechists have viewed the awareness video prior to the session, use this process but omit the showing of the video.

- **Program goals.** Ask volunteers to name the goal of a parish catechetical program. Record their responses on newsprint or an overhead transparency.
- **Summarize.** Summarize their insights and add your own understanding of the program goals.

- **Video.** Introduce the awareness video. Tell the catechists that the video will provide them with a short overview of the *Faith First Legacy Edition* program. Ask them to jot down features about the student books, the teaching process, and catechist support materials that impress them as they watch the video. Show the video and invite responses from the catechists. Explain your own reasons for choosing the *Faith First Legacy Edition* series for your parish catechetical program.
- **Browsing time.** Invite the catechists to browse through the program components during the break.

BREAK · 15 minutes

Part 2 The Catechetical **30 minutes** Ministry

“QuickStart for Catechists” on pages 17–34 of the grades 1–6 catechist guides or pages 19–37 of the junior high guides (JH) is an interactive, video-assisted workshop that provides a basic orientation to the catechetical ministry. “QuickStart” helps catechists answer four basic questions:

- What is a catechist?
- What will I teach?
- Who are my learners?
- How will I catechize them?

What Is Faith?

- **Faith.** Write the words “Faith is . . .” on the board or on newsprint. Ask each catechist to write a response to the statement and share it with a partner. Show Part 1, Segment 1 of the “QuickStart” video.
- **Response.** Share the definition of faith on page 17 of “QuickStart for Catechists” and have the table groups compare it with their definitions. Ask the catechists to write their responses to the two “For Reflection” questions on page 17 (JH page 19). Ask them to share their response to one of the questions with their table group.
- **Conclude.** Read aloud the quotation from the video. (See *GDC* 53.)

What Is a Catechist?

- **Summarize.** Share the content of page 18 in your own words. If your office still has a copy of *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States* (1979), show it to the group and explain its historical importance.
- **Video.** Show Part 1, Segment 2 of the “QuickStart” video.
- **Response.** Point out that page 19 (JH page 21) summarizes the list of qualities of catechists referred to on the video. Ask them to complete the “For Reflection” activity.
- **Growth plan.** If you have not yet discussed with the catechists a growth plan for the year, tell them you will discuss this later in the workshop.

What Is My Task?

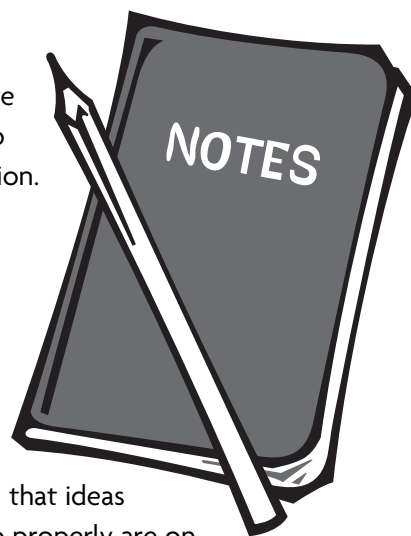
- **Discuss.** Ask: What is the most important thing you hope to accomplish this year? Ask volunteers to respond. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the quotation at the top of page 20 (JH page 22). Point out that this should be each catechist’s ultimate goal.
- **Church documents.** Show the catechists the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005).
- **Video.** Show Part 1, Segment 3 of the “QuickStart” video. Tell the catechists that they will be viewing a reflection on the six tasks of catechesis.
- **Response.** Point out that the “Tasks of Catechists” listed on “QuickStart” page 21 (JH page 23) are included in both documents. Ask the catechists to respond to the “For Reflection” questions. Remind the catechists that all the tasks of catechesis are interdependent and important.

Teaching Others to Pray

- **Begin.** Remind the catechists that a key task of catechesis is to teach others to pray. Read aloud the quotation from the General Directory at the top of “QuickStart” page 22.
- **Read.** Invite the catechists to read page 22 (JH page 24) silently.
- **Response.** Ask volunteers to write their responses

to the first “For Reflection” question and share their responses to the second question.

- **Summarize.** Share your own expectations for classroom prayer. Point out the importance of the classroom prayer center and that ideas for setting one up properly are on page 32 (JH page 34).



BREAK · 15 minutes

Part 3

30 minutes

Skills for Catechists

Assure the catechists that *Faith First* will provide them with all the tools they need to feel both competent and confident in their presentation of doctrine.

- **Begin.** Point out that becoming familiar with the spiral approach is essential to understanding the structure of *Faith First*.
- **Summarize.** Share the content on page 25 (JH page 25). Have the catechists discuss the “For Reflection” questions at their tables.
- **Explore.** Have them turn the page and look over the scope and sequence chart.
- **Video.** Show Part 1, Segment 3 of the “QuickStart” video to reinforce the main principles and advantages of the *Faith First* spiral approach.

Who Are My Learners?

- **Begin.** Ask the catechists to write their responses to the first reflection question on page 28 (JH page 30).
- **Read.** Have them silently read pages 28 and 29 (JH pages 30 and 31) to learn more about the typical characteristics of children at their grade levels.

- **Response.** Ask them to share one new thing they learned with a catechist for the same grade level. Then have them respond to the second reflection question.

How Do Children Learn?

Remind the catechists that the *National Directory for Catechesis* is the guide for the way that we are to do catechesis in the United States.

- **Begin.** Point out that a key passage in the *National Directory for Catechesis* names eight methodologies, or ways, that we learn about our faith. Tell them that the next video segment will explain these eight ways.
- **Video.** Show Part 1, Segment 4 of the “QuickStart” video.
- **Response.** Ask volunteers to share with you and the group one influence on their own faith journey.
- **Presentation.** Remind the catechists that they will influence the faith journeys of their students. To do the best job, they will need to develop certain knowledge and skills. Summarize the information about learning styles and multiple intelligences on page 30 (JH page 32) and pass out the handout on page 69. Then ask the catechists to look over the handout (pages 71 and 72) of appropriate activities for their grade levels.
- **Response.** Have them discuss the “For Reflection” questions in their table groups. Ask the catechists to make a resolution to try one new kind of activity each month.

Looking Ahead

- Remind the catechists that becoming a catechist is a gradual process. This workshop is only a beginning.
- If you have access to the *Echoes of Faith* catechist formation modules, point out to the catechists that each of the modules offers a more in-depth treatment of the topics discussed today. Suggestions are highlighted throughout the “QuickStart” workshop pages.
- Point out diocesan and parish resources and upcoming in-service opportunities.
- Invite catechists who have not already done so to make an appointment with you to design a personal growth plan for the coming year.

NOTE: You may wish to have a short standup break before proceeding to Part 4.

BREAK • 15 minutes

Part 4 Teaching a **35 minutes** Faith First Lesson

Tell the catechists that in this final segment of the workshop, they will learn the elements of a Faith First lesson.

- **Video.** Begin by showing Part 2 of the “QuickStart” video. This will provide an excellent demonstration of the teaching of a typical Faith First chapter.
- **Response.** Ask volunteers to share what they noticed and liked most in the video presentation.
- **The Catechetical Process.** Distribute the handout (page 70). Review the three-step process using the diagram on the page.
- **Catechist guides.** Point out some of the special features of the catechist guides:
 - Evaluation.** Emphasize the importance of self-evaluation and point out the evaluation features at the bottom of the “With My Family” page in each chapter.
 - Catholic Social Teaching.** Point out that there are eight boxes at each grade level each highlighting a key principle of the social teachings of the Catholic Church.
- **Student book.** Invite the catechists to turn to the contents page of the student book. Point out the following features:
 - “Welcome to Faith First!” opening day lesson
 - Thumbnail of content for each chapter given on the contents pages
 - Unit openers and unit reviews
 - “Catholic Prayers and Practices” section, glossary, and index
- Remind the catechists of the wealth of resources available each week on **www.FaithFirst.com**, especially its “Online Lesson Planner Resource.”

Closing Prayer

Close the in-service event with a service of commitment. A copy of the order of prayer for this service can be found on page 63.