

Eight Kinds of Smart

An Overview of Multiple Intelligences for Catechists



All of us have a best way of learning new things and of expressing what we have learned. Researchers say that there are, in fact, at least eight ways that this happens, and the list is basically the same for both adults and children, according to educational researcher Howard Gardner. He called his description of these ways of learning *multiple intelligences*. One of these eight ways of learning is usually dominant in each of us. Remembering these eight intelligences can help us offer the kinds of processes and activities that will assist others in the best possible way in their process of faith formation.

1 Word Smart (Linguistic Intelligence)

Some children are good with words, write and speak well, and are able to explain the meaning of things the best.

Teaching idea: Invite children to make up slogans and sayings about faith themes; have them write letters to officials to advocate for the needs of the disadvantaged.

2 Music Smart (Musical Intelligence)

Some children like to sing and may like to play musical and rhythm instruments.

Teaching idea: Invite these children to play music or lead singing at prayer services; invite them to compose rap songs or create a rhythmic accompaniment to express their faith.

3 Number/Reasoning Smart (Logical/Mathematical Intelligence)

Some children can imagine the consequences of things in numerical ways. They enjoy problem solving and putting things into correct categories.

Teaching idea: Make up matching games about faith vocabulary or Scripture stories; use number codes in hidden message games.

4 Picture Smart (Spatial Intelligence)

Some children think more in images and pictures rather than in words. They need to see things to understand them well.

Teaching idea: Use visual aids such as pictures or maps; include drawing activities.

5 Body Smart (Bodily-Kinesthetic)

Some children best express ideas and feelings with their bodies. They manipulate objects well and are good at making things with their hands.

Teaching idea: Incorporate role-play and mime activities; invite children to express faith and feelings in dance; have them construct models of churches.

6 People Smart (Interpersonal Intelligence)

Some children work well with others in groups. They can motivate others and can understand the other person's point of view easily.

Teaching idea: Invite children to work in groups; offer them dilemmas to solve that require seeing different points of view.

7 Self Smart (Intrapersonal Intelligence)

Some children know themselves well and know what they're best at. They work well independently.

Teaching idea: Incorporate journaling activities; offer opportunities for quiet, meditative forms of prayer.

8 Nature Smart (Naturalistic Intelligence)

Some children enjoy plants, animals, and other aspects of nature. They enjoy being outdoors and are attuned to changes in nature.

Teaching idea: Have children create a calendar of liturgical seasons; invite children to tend plants in the classroom; take them on nature walks when discussing God's creation.