

Quick Start for Religion Teachers

This workshop provides a three-hour video orientation to the catechetical ministry and to the *Faith First Legacy Edition* for your religion teachers. 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

- Copies of the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005)
- *Faith First Legacy Edition* awareness video
- QuickStart video
- Teacher guide and student book for each teacher
- Blackline master worksheets (pages 99–101)
- Name tags

Preparation Checklist

- Set a workshop date several months in advance.
- Choose a team to assist you.
- Remind teachers a day 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 teachers 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 the meeting room can be sufficiently darkened for optimal video viewing.
- **Hospitality.** Provide an attractively arranged hospitality table.

Session Plan **3-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 teachers to drop by and examine the print components there and view the awareness video at the school or at home. You should have received this video with your *Faith First Legacy Edition* sample pack.

20 minutes Introduction

- **Welcome.** Greet teachers as they arrive. Give them name tags, workshop packets, and the student book and teacher guide for their grade levels.
- **Begin on time.** Seat teachers 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 91.)
- **Break the ice.** Greet your teachers. Then invite them to write in the corners of their name tags 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 teachers introduce their partners to the large group or to their table groups if a very large number of teachers is present.

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

Note: If teachers 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 school religion 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 teachers 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 support materials that impress them as they watch the video. Show the video and invite responses from the teachers. Explain your own reasons for choosing the *Faith First Legacy Edition* series for your school religion program.
- **Browsing time.** Invite the teachers to browse through the program components during the break.

BREAK · 15 minutes

Part 2 The Catechetical Ministry **30 minutes**

“QuickStart for Religion Teachers” on pages 23–42 of the grades 1–6 catechist guides or pages 25–46 of the junior high guides (JH) is an interactive, video-assisted workshop that provides a basic orientation to the catechetical ministry. QuickStart helps teachers 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 teacher 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 23 of “QuickStart for Religion Teachers” and have the table groups compare it with their definitions. Ask the teachers to write their responses to the two “For Reflection” questions on page 23 (JH page 25). 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 24 in your own words. If your office still has a copy of the 1979 National Directory, *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for the United States*, 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 25 (JH page 27) summarizes the list of qualities of religion teachers referred to on the video. Ask them to complete the “For Reflection” activity.
- **Growth plan.** If you have not yet discussed with the teachers a growth plan for the year, tell them you will discuss this later in the workshop.

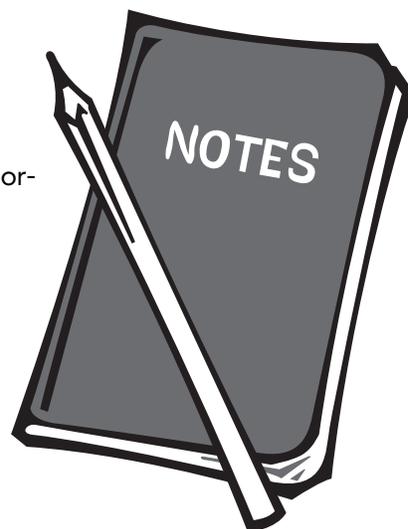
What Is My Task?

- **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 26 (JH page 28). Point out that this should be each teacher’s ultimate goal.
- **Church documents.** Show the teachers 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 teachers 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 27 (JH page 29) are included in both documents. Ask the teachers to respond to the “For Reflection” questions. Remind them that all the tasks of catechesis are interdependent and important.

Teaching Others to Pray

- **Begin.** Remind the teachers 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 28.
- **Read.** Invite the teachers to read page 28 (JH page 30) silently.
- **Response.** Ask volunteers to write their response 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 40 (JH page 31).



BREAK · 15 minutes

Part 3

30 minutes

Skills for Catechists

Assure the teachers 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 29 (JH page 32). Have the teachers 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 teachers to write their responses to the first reflection question on page 34 (JH page 38).
- **Read.** Have them silently read pages 34 and 35 (JH pages 38 and 39) to learn more about the typical characteristics of children at their grade levels.
- **Response.** Ask them to share one new thing they learned with someone seated next to them. Then have them respond to the second reflection question.

How Do Children Learn?

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

- **Begin.** Point out that a key passage in the National Directory 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 teachers 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 pages 36 and 37 (JH pages 40 and 41) and pass out the handout on page 99 of this manual. Then ask the teachers to look over the handouts (pages 100 and 101) of creative activities.
- **Response.** Have them discuss the “For Reflection” questions in their table groups. Ask the teachers to make a resolution to try one new kind of activity each month.

Looking Ahead

- Remind the teachers 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 teachers 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 teachers 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

35 minutes

Teaching a Faith First Lesson

Tell the teachers 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 teaching process.** Distribute the handout on page 104. Review the three-step process using the diagram on the page.
- **Teacher guides.** Point out some of the special features of the teacher 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 highlighting a key principle of the social teachings of the Catholic Church. In addition, these principles are taught in each of the cross-curricular pages at the end of each unit.
- **Student book.** Invite the teachers 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 teachers 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 92.