

Parish Directors: Catechist Meetings—Orientation

Familiarize yourself with the ritual action in the Opening Prayer. Select three persons to carry the holy water, candle, and Bible in the procession.

You will need:

A well designed prayer space with:

- a table covered with a white tablecloth
- a Bible on a stand
- a large candle
- candles for each participant
- matches or a lighter
- a large clear glass bowl with water
- a CD player
- *Alive in Christ* Songs of Scripture CD
- LED (optional)

Goals

- To introduce catechists to each other and the program
- To experience a prayerful ritual

Opening Prayer Service and Reflection

Sing together. “Holy Spirit, Be My Guide,” John Burland, *Alive in Christ* Songs of Scripture

As you sing, walk forward slowly. Follow the persons carrying the holy water, candle and Bible.

Leader: *Let us begin.*

God, our Loving Father, we are gathered here in your presence. We belong to you. Send us your Holy Spirit to help us live as disciples of your Son, Jesus. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: *On the day of our Baptism, we were claimed for Christ. By water and the Holy Spirit we received the gifts of faith and new life. On that day the faithful remembered their baptismal promises. Today, let us once again remember those promises together.*

Please come forward and gather around the holy water and candle.

Leader: *Do you say “no” to sin, so that you can live always as God’s children?*

All: We do.

Leader: *Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?*

All: We do.

Leader: *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord?*

All: We do.

Leader: *Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?*

All: We do.

Leader: *This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus.*

All: Amen.

Leader: *Let us come to the water and thank God for the gift of our Baptism. Please come to the water and make the Sign of the Cross with the water.*

When each person has made the Sign of the Cross, light a small candle from the large candle and distribute a candle to each catechist saying:

Leader: [Name] *You are the light of Christ.*

Have catechists return to their seats and continue:

Leader: *Loving God, we belong to you. We are your children. In Baptism we were united to your Son, Jesus. Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit as we remember our baptism. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

All: Amen.

Leader: *The Lord be with you.*

All: And also with you.

Leader: *A reading from the holy Gospel of John*

Read Romans 10:8-18

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Questions for reflection to be shared in a small group:

- What image or phrase is important for you in this reading?
- How does this reading speak to you about being a catechist this year?

When the discussion is finished, continue the prayer:

Leader: *Let us stand and pray as Jesus taught us:*

All: **Pray the Lord's Prayer together.**

Leader: *Let us offer each other the sign of peace.*

Welcome

- Welcome the catechists. Thank them for coming. Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Do an ice breaker to get catechists to meet one another or renew acquaintances. Suggestion: Ask catechists to pair up with someone they do not know and find out a little about them, so they will be able to introduce them to the group; or if there is a large number of catechists, invite them into small groups and have them answer the question: "Who was your favorite catechist or religion teacher and what did you like about him/her?"

Housekeeping

- Get the housekeeping details out of the way.
- Include location of space, group lists, calendars where and how to get supplies and other important information.
- Ask for questions. Especially be aware of first time catechists.

Break

Catechist Guide

- If catechists do not already have their Catechist Editions, distribute them now.
- Begin by walking catechists through a lesson and point out:
 - Background pages
 - Planner page and also refer to online Lesson Planning at aliveinchrist.osv.com.
 - Three-step lesson process, note the focus for each step. Emphasize the importance of doing all the steps and the concluding prayer.
 - Wrap-around lesson plan with directions.
 - Information on the bottom of each page.
- Have catechists turn to the Table of Contents and show how the themes are developed with three chapters.
- Be sure to draw catechists' attention to the Seasonal lessons and Live Your Faith lessons.
- Call attention to the information in the introductory pages.
- Finally have them turn to the program's scope and sequence and give them an overview of the entire program.
- Ask for questions.

Closing Blessing:

Gather the catechists in a group around the prayer space.
Extend your hands over the catechists and pray in these or similar words:

God the Father of mercies has sent his Son into the world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may you continue to be transformed into the Body of Christ and witness to his love in the world. Amen.