

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING CATECHETICAL TEXTBOOKS

Introduction

Each year, as a service to pastors and parish and school catechetical leaders, the Office of Christian Formation publishes a list of religious education textbooks and series that are evaluated according to criteria that conform to appropriate guidelines for the selection of these materials (see Evaluation Criteria below). The materials that are evaluated are taken from the list of textbooks and series that are found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Since this list is constantly being edited, the most updated listing can be downloaded from the USCCB website, <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/index.htm> and then link to the current issue of the *Catechism Update*.

Evaluation Criteria

The Office of Christian Formation will continue to evaluate materials from publishers as new texts and series are published and reviewed by the Catechism Committee. A standing committee of catechetical leaders and teachers will evaluate additional textbooks and materials as they become available or as otherwise needed. Additional catechetical works, then, will be evaluated and added to this document.

The **National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)** states that all catechetical texts should:

- ❖ Present the authentic message of Christ and his Church, adapted to the capacity of the learners and in language that can be understood by them.
- ❖ Be faithful to the Sacred Scripture
- ❖ Highlight the essential truths of the faith, giving proper emphasis to particular truths in accord with their importance within the hierarchy of truths
- ❖ Be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- ❖ Be approved by the local Bishop
- ❖ Give to those who use them a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ
- ❖ Promote a true conversion to Jesus Christ
- ❖ Inspire and encourage those who use them to live the Christian life more faithfully
- ❖ Be culturally appropriate and reflect the real-life situations of those who use them
- ❖ Promote charity, appreciation, and respect for persons of all racial, ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds
- ❖ Present other ecclesial communities and religions accurately
- ❖ Employ a variety of sound catechetical methodologies based on the results of responsible catechetical research
- ❖ Include appropriate examples of Christian prayer and opportunities for liturgical experiences and incorporate the use of Sacred Scripture as a text for study along with other catechetical textbooks
- ❖ Offer short passages of Sacred Scripture that can easily be learned by heart
- ❖ Contain opportunities to review and measure progress in learning
- ❖ Be visually attractive, engage the students, and incorporate a variety of examples of Christian art.
- ❖ Include graphics that represent the various regional, cultural, economic, and religious characteristics of the people who will be using them
- ❖ Engage the intellect, emotion, imagination, and creativity of the students (283-84).

Scores on the following evaluation chart were obtained by: 1) averaging evaluations that were submitted by parish and school catechists from across the diocese (see the list of volunteer evaluators at the end of this document). 2) comparing the averaged scores with results from other dioceses.

3) finally, a review of the process was conducted by the Office of Christian Formation Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is made up of parish directors of religious education and school religion administrators (see the list of Advisory Council members at the end of this document).

It is recommended that pastors and parish and school catechetical leaders select materials that have scored 2.5 or above on the evaluation.

For information on high school curriculum guidelines, go to www.dol-louisiana.org, Christian Formation, Doctrinal Guidelines for High School, USCCB.org

Textbook Evaluation – June 22, 2007 Update

Diocese of Lafayette

Office of Christian Formation

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Key: CD=culturally diverse; AA=age appropriate; M=various methods used; TM=adequate teacher’s manual; LE=life experience is recognized; FM=family materials are included; CF=offers catechist formation; AV=gives audio-visual suggestions; MS=morally sound; SJ=addresses social justice issues; FS =final score

Evaluation code: 3 - Outstanding; 2 - Satisfactory; 1 – Minimally Adequate; 0 - Unacceptable

Elementary Series: School and Parish

Name of series, publisher, grades, dates	CD	AA	M	TM	LE	FM	CF	AV	MS	SJ	FS	
Blest Are We Silver Burdett Ginn, 1-6	2004	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
Blest Are We, Junior High Silver Burdett Ginn, 7-8	2005	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
Call to Faith Harcourt Religion Publishers, K-6	2005	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9
Christ Jesus, the Way Benziger, K-6	2003	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.3	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.7
*Christ Our Life Loyola Press, K-8	1999, 2002	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.5 2.7
Come Follow Me Benziger, K-8	1998											
Coming To Faith Wm. H. Sadlier, K-6	1999	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.8
Coming To Faith/Keystone Edition Wm. H. Sadlier, K-6	1999	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9
Faith and Life Ignatius Press, 1-8	2003-02	1.5	3.1	3.0	3.7	2.5	1.9	1.0	3.0	4.0	1.7	2.5
Faith and Witness Program Wm. H. Sadlier, 7-8	1998-99	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8
Faith First RCL-Resources for Christian Living, K-6	2000	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.7	2.8
Faith First Junior High RCL-Resources for Christian Living, 7-8	2001	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.0		2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8
Faith First/Legacy Edition RCL-Resources for Christian Living, K-8	2006	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9
*Finding God (New) Loyola Press, 7-8	2007	2.8	2.1	1.6	2.3	2.8	1.2	3.0	2.0	2.9	3.0	2.8
*Finding God: Our Response to God’s Gift Loyola Press, 1-6	2005	2.9	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.5 2.6
Image of God Ignatius Press, K-8	1993	1.6	1.6	1.0	1.3	1.3	0.3	0.8	1.7	2.1	1.8	1.5
One Faith, One Lord Wm. H. Sadlier, 7-8	2003											
Our Catholic Identity RCL-Resources for Christian Living, 1-8	1998											

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Elementary Series: School and Parish (continued)

		CD	AA	M	TM	LE	FM	CF	AV	MS	SJ	FS
Share the Joy Benziger, K-6	1997	2.4	2.5	2.0	2.0	2	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.1
This is Our Faith Silver Burdett Ginn, K-8	1998	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9
Walking by Faith Harcourt Religion Publishers, K-6	1999	2.6	2.5	2.1	2.5	2.7	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.3
We Believe William H. Sadlier, Inc. , K-6	2004	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9

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Sacramental Preparation Materials

		CD	AA	M	TM	LE	FM	CF	AV	MS	SJ	FS
Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation and Eucharist Harcourt Religion Publishers	2000											
Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation and Eucharist (II) Harcourt Religion Publishers	2002											
Eucharist RCL- Resources for Christian Living	2003											
Eucharist – We Give Thanks and Praise(primary) Benziger	2006											
Eucharist – We Give Thanks and Praise (intermediate) Benziger	2006											
First Reconciliation William H. Sadlier	2000											

First Eucharist William H. Sadlier	2000														
Reconciliation RCL-Resources for Christian Living	2003														
Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (primary) Benziger	2006														
Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (intermediate) Benziger	2006														
Send Out Your Spirit Ave Maria Press	2003														
Materials in Other Languages															
Celebrar nuestro f: Reconciliacion y Eucharistia Harcourt Religion Publishers	2000														
Celebrar nuestro f: Reconciliacion y Eucharistia (Nivel II) Harcourt Religion Publishers	2002														

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Materials in Other Languages, continued

Christo Jesus, el Camino (K-6) Benziger	2003														
Eucharistia, RCL – Resources for Christian Living	2003														
Primera Reconciliacion William H. Sadlier	2000														
Primera Comunion William H. Sadlier	2000														
Reconciliacion, RCL - Resources for Christian Living	2003														
Reconciliacion: Perdon y paz Benziger	2006														
The Spirit Sets Us Free: Confirmation Prep for Youth Vietnamese Catechetical Committee	2001														

Supplemental Materials

Benziger Family Life (K-8) Benziger	2001																		
Growing in Love (K-8) Harcourt Religion Publishers	2001																		

Evaluations of many of these texts, as well as others on the conformity list, by the Diocese of Pittsburgh can be found at <http://www.diopitt.org/education/texteval> or <http://www.diopitt.org/education/texteval.PDF>. This resource provides commendations and augmentations needed to effectively use these texts.

Scope and Sequence

The “**scope**” of a series refers to the total amount of information (doctrine, scripture, tradition, prayer, etc.) that is taught in the entire series.

The “**sequence**” of a series refers to when (grade level) each module of information is taught. For example: the Ten Commandments are taught in fourth grade while the sacraments are taught in fifth grade. The series, as a whole, follows a specific sequence thus insuring that the total *deposit of faith* is addressed. Textbooks at each grade level are designated to address specific areas of the *deposit of faith*.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE			
LEVEL	THEME	GENERAL OUTLINE	CCC REFERENCES
Kindergarten	God Asks Us To Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership in God’s Family - Birth 2. Membership in Church – Baptism 3. Respect and Love for Persons, Home, Community, World 4. Care for Creation 5. Understand Feelings and Senses and How They Affect People 6. Resolve Conflicts Peacefully 	<p>2196: You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself</p> <p>1213: The Sacrament of Baptism</p> <p>1701: Man: The Image of God</p> <p>2401: The Seventh Commandment</p> <p>2258: The Fifth Commandment</p>
Grade 1	Meeting Jesus and His Father	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God Loves Us, So Each of Us is Special 2. God is Creator of All 3. Jesus is God’s Greatest Gift 4. We Belong to Jesus’ Family, the Church 5. We Celebrate the Church Year 	<p>26: I Believe, We Believe</p> <p>198: I Believe in God the Father</p> <p>422: I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God</p> <p>748: I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church</p> <p>1168: When is the Liturgy Celebrated?</p>
Grade 2	Meeting Jesus in Reconciliation and Eucharist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baptism – Called to Follow Jesus 2. Sinfulness: Turning Away From God and God’s Family 3. Reconciliation: Return to the Father and God’s Family 	<p>1213: The Sacrament of Baptism</p> <p>1420: The Sacraments of Healing</p>

		4. We Celebrate Reconciliation of Several Penitents	1427: The Conversion of the Baptized
		5. We Celebrate Reconciliation of Several Penitents With Individual Confession and Absolution	1420: The Sacraments of Healing
		6. The Catholic Community Celebrates the Presence of Jesus	1322: The Sacrament of the Eucharist
		7. Eucharist: Means “Remember” and “Thanksgiving”	1322: The Sacrament of the Eucharist
		8. We Celebrate the Eucharist as a Community	1322: The Sacrament of the Eucharist

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE			
LEVEL	THEME	GENERAL OUTLINE	CCC REFERENCES
Grade 3	Believing in Jesus and Our Church Community	1. Jesus Calls Us to Believe 2. Jesus Calls Us to Serve Others 3. Jesus is With Us Always 4. Jesus Shares His Spirit With Us The Church Remembers Jesus: Liturgical Seasons	142: Man’s Response to God 1897: Participation in Social Life 1113: The Paschal Mystery in the Church’s Sacraments 683: I Believe in the Holy Spirit 1117, 1118, 1168: When is the Liturgy Celebrated
Grade 4	Living as Jesus’ Followers	1. Living as God’s People 2. Living God’s Love (Commandments 1-3) 3. Loving One Another (Commandments 4-10) 4. Living as Followers of Jesus	2052: The Ten Commandments
Grade 5	Celebrating Jesus’ Presence	1. Sacraments: Signs of Christ Being Present 2. Sacraments of Initiation 3. Sacraments of Healing 4. Sacraments: Signs of Service 5. Becoming Life-Giving People 6. Being Catholic: Growing in Faith	1076: The Sacramental Economy 1212: The Sacraments of Initiation 1420: The Sacraments of Healing

Grade 6	Discovering the Story of God's People	1. The Bible: Beginning Our Faith Story 2. Growing in Freedom and Responsibility: Our Ancestors In Faith 3. Becoming a People of Trust and Justice 4. Jesus Announces the Kingdom of God	101: Sacred Scripture 574: Jesus and Israel
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**SCOPE AND SEQUENCE
DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE**

LEVEL	THEME	GENERAL OUTLINE	CCC REFERENCES
Grade 7	Encountering Jesus and the Gospels	1. Who Am I? 2. Who Is Jesus? 3. The Gospel Tells Us Who Jesus Is 4. The Catholic Community Celebrates Jesus 5. The Catholic Community Expresses Its Belief in Jesus Christ	422: I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God 1066: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery 1113: The Church's Sacraments
Grade 8	Belonging to Our Church Community	1. We Are the Church 2. Becoming Catholic 3. The Church of Jesus Christ 4. The Church: Our Heritage and Tradition 5. God's Covenant: A Way to Life and Love 6. The Church Celebrates	748: I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church 1212: The Sacraments of Christian Initiation 748: I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church 2052: The Ten Commandments 1066: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery

Textbook Series

Catechetical textbooks are among the tools for learning placed directly in the hands of catechumens and those being catechized. In the United States, catechetical textbooks for children and young people are ordinarily part of an integrated series that has been prepared for a number of grade levels, usually preschool or kindergarten through sixth or eighth grade. In addition, high school texts address core components of the faith in a variety of formats. (NDC 283)

It is recommended that parishes and schools select and use an entire textbook series for their catechetical programs. Using the whole series from the same publisher insures consistent and systematic coverage of the material at each grade level and throughout the entire catechetical process. Most publishers produce series for elementary and junior high or junior high and high school. Very few publishers produce a series that encompasses kindergarten through twelfth grade. The same publisher/series should be used for all elementary grades and, if possible, junior high while choosing a different publisher for high school. The alternative is to use the same publisher/series for junior high and high school while choosing a different publisher for the elementary grades.

Teachers' Manuals

Catechist and teacher manuals are essential components of any sound catechetical textbook series. Fundamentally, they should communicate to catechists and teachers what they themselves are expected to communicate to the students. Catechist and teacher manuals should contain an explanation of the message of salvation (constant references must be made to the sources, and a clear distinction must be kept between those things which pertain to the faith and to the doctrine that must be held, and those things which are mere opinions of theologians); psychological and pedagogical advice; suggestions about methods (NDC 285).

Language

Increasing numbers of Catholics need catechetical materials in languages other than English. These materials are most effectively developed by native speakers of those languages who know the respective cultures and who also have catechetical expertise. It is ordinarily not sufficient merely to translate catechetical materials prepared for English speakers into the languages of those being catechized (NDC 284).

The Office of Christian Formation maintains samples (examination copies) of textbooks written in Spanish.

Persons with Disabilities

“Wherever appropriate, special materials for use in the catechesis of persons with disabilities should be developed by professionals in the respective fields of special education in collaboration with those familiar with the languages and cultures of the persons with the specific disabilities”(NDC 284).

Catechetical leaders should consult the Office of Persons with Disabilities for appropriate information on available services and materials.

Other Instructional Materials

“Other instructional materials include catechetical guides for program leaders and catechists, parent education materials, resources for the baptismal catechumenate and marriage, and other sacramental preparation materials.” (NDC 285)

Supplementary educational resources for program leaders provide a helpful overview of the catechetical plan and practical suggestions for achieving its objectives. Supplementary materials for catechists should enrich their knowledge of the curriculum and strengthen their ability to adapt individual program objectives to the capacity of the students. (NDC 285)

Parents' Role

Catechetical textbook series should also include materials specifically designed to assist parents in their roles as the primary catechists of their children. Those materials should be geared directly to the parents and provide them with both the information and the practical tools to reinforce the objectives of the catechesis their children are receiving (NDC 285).

Adult Catechesis

“Catechetical materials for adults most often take the form of adult catechisms or resources for the baptismal catechumenate, for parish renewal, and for small Christian communities.” (NDC 283)

Resources

Documents of the Universal Church:

- **Address of JOHN PAUL II, 2002 International Catechetical Congress, 10th Anniversary of Catechism of the Catholic Church**
- **Catechesi Tradendae**, 1979
- **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000, 1994, 1997
- **General Directory for Catechesis**, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997

Documents from the United States Catholic Bishops:

- Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Catechism Update: Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005.
- Committees on Education and Catechesis: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. National Directory for Catechesis. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005.
- Committee on Education and Catechesis: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials. Washington, DC: USCCB, 1990.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. To Teach as Jesus Did: A Pastoral Message on Catholic Education. Washington, DC: USCC, 1972

Documents from the Diocese of Lafayette

- Textbook Guidelines Committee: Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Lafayette. Guidelines for the Selection of Religious Education Textbooks for Parishes and Schools. Lafayette, LA: Office of Religious Education, 1998.