

# Ecclesial Methodology for RCIA Catechesis

This methodology recognizes the catechist as the primary and irreplaceable witness to the Catholic faith. The best text in existence cannot make a participant feel welcome or included, cannot anticipate a participant's questions or concerns; it cannot witness to the faith as it is lived. A text or methodology is only a tool in the hands of **the most important instrument** in God's work of conversion - the **Catechist and RCIA Team**.

## 1. Preparation

The purpose of this step is to help create the conditions for God's Word to enter into the hearts and lives of participants. It should help them disengage from other distractions and focus on the catechetical session to begin. This is the perfect time to do a Celebration of the Word of God. Otherwise, some other form of prayer or appropriate hymn opens the session in a spirit of contemplation within which the session will take place. Also:

- ☞ Ensure environment for the catechetical session is hospitable, clean, and attractive.
- ☞ A Sacred Space should be ready - including a simple altar draped in the color liturgical season or feast; a beautiful crucifix, icon or statue - preferably reflecting the feast, season or lesson; enthroned Scripture; and candle to be lit representing the presence of Christ in our midst.
- ☞ In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, St. Augustine instructed his deacon to ensure that the environment in which catechumens would be taught would neither be too warm (and get sleepy) or too cold (and get distracted) - so be sure and do the same!
- ☞ Learn the names and a bit about each RCIA participant as soon as possible, and be ready (not rushing around) to receive and welcome them when they arrive.

## 2. Proclamation

Your announcement and (short) description of the topic to be examined and discussed during the catechetical session; clearly and succinctly stated:

- ☞ It will serve as the key element to engage participants
- ☞ A good Proclamation gives the "outline" for the rest of the catechetical session and is the central step of the methodology.

### **3. Explanation**

- ☞ The topic in the Explanation must follow clearly from the Proclamation.
- ☞ Be sure to include the scriptural and catechetical foundations of the topic explained.
- ☞ Use a (short) personal testimony where applicable.
- ☞ Be sure to relate the topic to Salvation History and to Jesus and saving mission in the Explanation.

### **4. Application**

- ☞ Questions that arise from the Explanation are answered.
- ☞ This step is to help participants engage, and at times, even struggle with the truths brought forth in the Explanation. Do not shirk topics or moral issues that you think might be difficult! "...the person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive 'the word of faith' (Romans 10:8) not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire, in all its rigor and vigor." - St. Pope John Paul II.
- ☞ Small group discussion is often an effective way to help participants talk about and process what they have heard to assimilate and embrace it – and how to live it out.
- ☞ All questions, doubts, or even misgivings needn't be immediately resolved. It may take some time, discernment, and "taking it to prayer." This is the perfect opportunity to show participants how to ask for God's grace to learn and grow in faithfulness.

### **5. Celebration**

- ☞ This is the participant's opportunity to respond to the revelation and grace given to them as they grow in knowledge and understanding of the Faith during this catechetical session.
- ☞ A prayer, song, litany, or one of the minor rites can be used to end the catechetical session. This brings the session opened during the Preparation to a close as they transition back into the world live out what they have learned and experienced.