

# A CATECHIST

*(Catechist expectations on other side)*

*A catechist is faith, hope, and love attached to arms and legs, aches and pains, family duties and not enough time.*

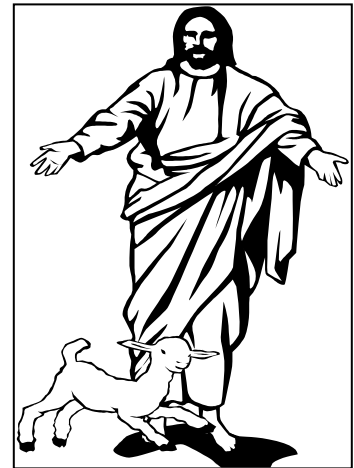
*A catechist is an ordinary person who is extraordinary because he or she teaches as Jesus did.*

*A catechist is faithful to the past, open to the future, but especially dedicated to deepening the faith of the present generation.*

*From the poem "A Catechist Is" by Msgr. John Francis Murphy*

The following are personal traits of one who may be called to be a catechist:

- ♥ an active faith life expressed in the worshipping community;
- ♥ an interest and concern about people's growth in faith;
- ♥ an ability to relate well with others;
- ♥ an integration of prayer into one's personal life;
- ♥ a willingness to be of service to the Church;
- ♥ a sense of humor and flexibility.



*In addition to these personal traits,  
a catechist needs above all the quality of a mature, articulate faith.*

It is essential that catechists take time to learn more about the faith they want to share and about the art of sharing it personally and effectively. The response to the call of being a catechist includes willingness to give time and talent, not only to catechizing others, but to one's own continued growth in faith and understanding.

Learning and teaching information is not an adequate description of the catechetical process. It is not just teaching and learning content, but teaching and learning a faith-filled way of life. Catechesis is about conversion and living out that conversion. It goes beyond handing on a body of truths.

Becoming a catechist is not a matter of learning how to do something TO the student; nor is it learning how to do something FOR the student. Rather, it is learning how to do something WITH the student. The emphasis is on relationship. The catechist is seen as a witness to and a prophet of the message communicated.

Catechists, like most people, need to be wanted. They want to be helpful. They have found something valuable, and they want to share it. However, one must remember that faith grows as each individual freely accepts or rejects God's invitation to grow. Catechists cannot simply tell students what to do or stereotype them. Growth in faith cannot be programmed. It is a delicate flower, a mystery with its own unique rhythm and surprising path of enlightenment.

*(from Sharing the Light of Faith, National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States)*

As catechists participate in the catechetical ministry, their religious lives will be intensified and they will find themselves growing in the qualities needed for successful ministry to others. It is these human and Christian qualities of catechists, more than their methods and tools, upon which the success of catechesis depends.

### **Response to a Call:**

The response to this call, which comes from the Lord, includes willingness to give time and talent, not only to catechizing others, but to one's own continued growth in faith and understanding.

### **Witness to the Gospel:**

For catechesis to be effective, the catechist must be fully committed to Jesus Christ. Faith must be shared with conviction, joy, love, enthusiasm, and hope. This is possible only when the catechist believes in the Gospel and its power to transform lives. To give witness to the Gospel, the catechist must establish a living, ever-deepening relationship with the Lord. He or she must be a person of prayer, one who frequently reflects on the Scriptures and whose Christ-like living testifies to deep faith. Only men and women of faith can share faith with others, preparing the setting within which people can respond in faith to God's grace.

### **Commitment to Church:**

One who exercises the ministry of the Word represents the Church to which the Word has been entrusted. The catechist believes in the Church and is aware that, as a pilgrim people, it is in constant need of renewal. Committed to this visible community, the catechist strives to be an instrument of the Lord's power and a sign of the Spirit's presence.

The catechist realizes that it is Christ's message which he or she is called to proclaim. To insure fidelity to that message, catechists test and validate their understanding and insights in the light of

the Gospel message as presented by the teaching authority of the Church.

### **Sharer in Community:**

The catechist is called to foster community as one who has "learned the meaning of community by experiencing it." Community is formed in many ways. Beginning with acceptance of individual strengths and weaknesses, it progresses to relationships based on shared goals and values. It grows through discussion, recreation, cooperation on projects, and the like.

Christian community is fostered especially by the Eucharist, "which is at once sign of community and cause of its growth." The catechist needs to experience this unity through frequent participation in the celebration of the Eucharist with other catechists and with those being catechized.

### **Catechist Expectations:**

**A Catechist is a role model of Catholic teachings and values. In addition catechists are expected:**

- to make a good faith commitment for the school year
- to work as a team with co-catechist
- to work as a team with other members of the religious education team, with the pastoral staff, and with parents
- to have good attendance with an earnest effort at securing a substitute from the substitute list and timely notification of co-catechist and DRE when absent
- to make a good faith commitment to know the catechetical guidelines at Good Shepherd and to follow them
- to follow the catechetical program
- to pray for your students, their families, and your ministry.