

## Appendix B: The Role of the Heart in Catechesis

When it comes to catechesis, it is important to realize that this important work of teaching and handing on the faith is only one aspect of the process of evangelization. We do not teach for the sake of teaching, but rather, we teach in order to invite people into relationship and intimacy with Christ in His Church. This goal of inviting people into relationship with Christ takes on different forms; it can look like offering good hospitality and a welcoming environment at a catechetical setting or it can mean offering people an opportunity to go to Confession and Adoration after a catechetical session. And when it does come to the teaching and ensuring that students are being given what is laid out in the curriculum standards, this should not be something that is constricted to merely intellectual exercise or study. This is not something that is done in order to check the boxes. It is important that our teaching engages the hearts of our students. It is the heart where Christ truly comes close to us and touches our lives. Intentional effort should be made to engage the heart as topics are being taught in our catechetical settings, with special attention being given to prayer and to the liturgy of the Church. We want to give people a chance to truly come into contact with Jesus Christ and *know Him* through the power of the Holy Spirit, not simply learn about Him.

The Holy Spirit is truly the One who accomplishes the work of catechesis and evangelization, we humbly participate in His work. It is important for us to invite the Holy Spirit to guide us in allowing our catechetical sessions to become an opportunity to not only teach some facts, but a true opportunity for our students to encounter the Living God in their very hearts.

Sometimes it can be very difficult to gauge where a student is at – whether the faith is something that has truly touched their heart, or if it is simply a collection of facts that they may or may not have memorized. Hearing the responses from the following questions can sometimes be helpful in gauging more accurately where a student is at in their faith journey:

- Do you think Jesus was a real person?
- Who is God to you?
- What do you want to get out of this year?
- Why do you come to faith formation?
- What don't you like about the Church?
- Do you pray alone? If so, how often?
- Does your faith impact your day-to-day life?
- Do you talk to other people about your faith?
- What have you noticed God doing in your life lately?
- Where have you encountered Christ?
- Do you believe Christ is really present in the Eucharist?
- What have been some challenges in the last year, and how have you noticed God or other people helping you?
- Have you seen God answer prayer before? What happened?

- Do you have a Bible? Do you know where it is?
- How often do you come to Mass?
- What is your experience at Mass like?

Included in the table below are some ideas for engaging the heart when it comes to various topics of the faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you as to how to engage the hearts of those in your program. The following ideas should be modified according to the age and maturity level of the student.

Topic	Ideas for Engaging the Heart
Ten Commandments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examination of conscience</li> <li>- Teaching to say “Blessed be the name of the Lord” whenever you use or you hear the name of the Lord in vain</li> <li>- Visual activity making God center of life (for example, art project for young children)</li> <li>- Meditation taking you deeper into the 10 Commandments (beyond the obvious ways we live them out)</li> </ul>
The Eucharist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eucharistic Adoration</li> <li>- Teaching Mass</li> <li>- Invitation to Mass</li> <li>- Prayer in front of the tabernacle</li> <li>- Giving a meditation such as St. Teresa of Calcutta’s “I Thirst” for time in Adoration</li> <li>- Eucharistic miracle stories</li> </ul>
Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invitation to become an altar server</li> <li>- Using a Mass journal (write down something that stands out to you at Mass)</li> <li>- Mini pilgrimage to have Mass in a beautiful cathedral or other church</li> <li>- Walking through the Mass parts and responses</li> <li>- Reading the readings for Mass ahead of time (especially in preparation for Sunday Mass)</li> <li>- Singing songs for Mass ahead of time</li> </ul>
Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Rosary</li> <li>- Visit to statue of Mary</li> <li>- Giving roses to Mary</li> <li>- Crowning Mary in May</li> <li>- Guided prayer giving hearts to Mary</li> <li>- Marian consecration</li> <li>- Stories of apparitions of Mary</li> </ul>

The Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mini pilgrimage to see the universal nature of the Church</li> <li>- Visit to the Church</li> <li>- Church tour</li> </ul>
Baptism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Renewing baptismal promises</li> <li>- Invitation to the Easter Vigil</li> </ul>
Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witness</li> <li>- Examination of conscience</li> <li>- Regular opportunity and availability for students to make use of the sacrament and get in the habit of going</li> </ul>
Confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witness given by older student or adult</li> <li>- Invitation to the Easter Vigil or the Confirmation Mass</li> <li>- Prayer to the Holy Spirit</li> </ul>
Holy Orders and the Priesthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witness given by priest and/or deacon</li> <li>- Praying for our Bishop, priests, and deacons</li> </ul>
Anointing of the Sick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Praying for those who are sick from our parish</li> <li>- Witness from someone who had a powerful experience receiving the sacrament</li> </ul>
Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witness given by holy married couple</li> <li>- Have youth host a “date night” for married couples of the parish and include a prayer/blessing for the marriages</li> <li>- Offering teaching on Theology of the Body and practical dating/relationship application for older youth</li> </ul>
Vocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Witnesses given by people in different vocations</li> <li>- Diocesan vocation prayer</li> <li>- Guided prayer of surrender</li> </ul>
Morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Question and answer panel</li> <li>- Question box available throughout the year</li> <li>- Going through one “hot button” topic a week</li> </ul>
Catholic Social Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CRS Rice Bowl during Lent</li> <li>- Heifer International</li> <li>- Give practical opportunities to practice the principles as a group (example: serving at a soup kitchen out of solidarity)</li> <li>- Prayer for those suffering in the world</li> </ul>
Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saint stories</li> <li>- Readings the writings of the saints</li> <li>- Having images of saints around</li> <li>- Litany of the Saints</li> <li>- Venerating relics that are available at the parish</li> <li>- Celebrating special feast days as a group</li> </ul>
Sacramental Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Church tour</li> <li>- Confessional tour</li> <li>- Visit with the priest</li> <li>- Saint stories (especially relating to Reconciliation and the Eucharist)</li> <li>- Eucharistic miracle stories</li> </ul>

Scripture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lectio Divina</li> <li>- Bible timeline/getting the context of the overall story of Scripture</li> <li>- Guidance in where to start when it comes to reading Scripture (example: not the most helpful to read cover to cover)</li> <li>- Scripture challenges for students to do at home or before bed</li> </ul>
Church History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sacred art</li> <li>- Sacred music</li> <li>- Bible study</li> <li>- Study going through a Church document (for an older/more engaged youth)</li> <li>- Learning about Church councils</li> <li>- Story of salvation and how we fit into it</li> <li>- Mapping our faith journey (even starting with our family)</li> </ul>
The Trinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prayer to the Holy Spirit</li> <li>- Praise and Worship</li> <li>- Healing prayer centered on father wounds</li> </ul>
Theology of the Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prayer focused on healing</li> <li>- Healing Mass</li> <li>- Having an engaging speaker or workshop</li> <li>- Witnesses speaking to the beauty of Theology of the Body practically lived in our lives</li> </ul>
Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Divine Mercy Chaplet</li> <li>- Stations of the Cross</li> <li>- Rosary</li> <li>- Guided prayer</li> <li>- Guided meditation</li> <li>- Lectio Divina</li> <li>- ARRR method of prayer</li> <li>- Ignatian spirituality</li> <li>- Adoration</li> </ul>
Virtues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Virtue Quest” hands-on type activity learning how to apply them in real life situations</li> <li>- Examination of conscience relating to the virtues specifically</li> <li>- Taking your “virtue temperature” – honest look at how well we are living them out, with little ideas for growing in them and practicing them</li> </ul>
Works of Mercy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical opportunities to practice them as a group (both spiritual and corporal)</li> </ul>
Liturgical Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liturgy of the Hours</li> <li>- Liturgical season related celebrations (ex. Resurrection Party)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having a sacred space throughout the year that changes relating to the liturgical season</li> <li>- Guidance in making Lenten promises (with special attention given to why we make them)</li> <li>- Celebrating feast days or solemnities</li> </ul>
Respect Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service project to help women in difficult pregnancies</li> <li>- Visit to the nursing home</li> <li>- Making cards for the elderly of the parish at Christmas</li> <li>- Having the local crisis pregnancy center give an age-appropriate presentation</li> </ul>
For any topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoration</li> <li>- Mass</li> <li>- Reconciliation</li> <li>- Prayer</li> <li>- Witness</li> <li>- Small group discussion</li> <li>- Giving ideas for personal application (challenges to “live it out”)</li> </ul>