

## **Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend Office of Catechesis**

### **Directives for Textbook Selection Parish Programs and Catholic Schools**

A catechetical textbook is an important tool in systematically teaching the content of the Catholic Faith, as specified in the diocesan *Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*. Each child should have his/her own textbook – preferably new each year. Since textbook companies continuously revise their materials, each parish should review their textbook choices about every five years.

In 1996 the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism began the conformity reviews of catechetical materials. In this diocese it is the mandate of Bishop John D’Arcy that all textbooks chosen have the approval of the Ad Hoc Committee. To find an updated list of all approved materials one should go to “List of Catechetical Texts in PDF” under “Conformity Reviews.” The website is [www.usccb.org/catechism/](http://www.usccb.org/catechism/)

The Bishops approve texts to make sure that doctrinal content is in conformity to the teachings of the Church as found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

In 1997 the new *General Directory for Catechesis* was revised in Rome. In May 2005 the *National Directory for Catechesis* was promulgated by the USCCB.

Both of these documents affirm that catechesis models the way Christ formed his disciples. “Christ’s method of formation was accomplished by diverse yet inter-related tasks. His example is the most fruitful inspiration for effective catechesis today because it is integral to formation in the Christian Faith” (*NDC #20*).

Thus all efforts in evangelization and catechesis should incorporate six tasks:

1. promote the knowledge of the faith
2. promote a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments
3. promote moral formation in Jesus Christ
4. teach the Christian to pray with Jesus Christ
5. prepare the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
6. promote a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society

The books reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee are doctrinally sound but may lack sufficient coverage of the Liturgy, Scripture, life and mission of the Church, etc. An

example would be: *Faith and Life* from Ignatius Press. However, the Office of Catechesis chooses texts which encompass the various tasks of catechesis.

The Office of Catechesis, collaborating with Bishop D'Arcy in his role as chief teacher of the diocese, provides Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines for each grade level. These guidelines precede the use of textbooks. The goal of the guidelines is to present a Catechesis which is fully formative, encompassing the authenticity and completeness of the Christian message as put forward in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

### **Grade Level Core Themes**

- Grade One: To develop an awareness of God who gives life and grace to us, the wonders of creation and the promise of eternal life.
- Grade Two: To grow in a personal relationship with Christ by receiving his forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. To receive the fullness of Christ, through the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- Grade Three: To deepen the child's understanding of the Church and to help the child experience the Church as a Christian Community.
- Grade Four: To help the children form their consciences according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, and to learn the basis of Christian morality especially as taught in the Old and New Testaments.
- Grade Five: To help the child to become a conscious and active member of the Church through an appreciation and celebration of its sacramental life, and to experience and understand the rites of the Sacraments.
- Grade Six: To understand the Old Testament as the revelation of God in the history of a people, a revelation fulfilled in the New Testament.

Thus, the diocese will recommend texts that support the Grade Level Core Themes. In light of this, the following texts are recommended by the diocese for grades one through six:

**We Believe** – Wm. Sadlier: 2004  
**Blest Are We** – Silver Burdett & Ginn: 2008  
**Christ our Life** – Loyola: 2007  
**Christ Jesus, the Way** – RCL Benziger: 2003  
**Call to Faith** – Harcourt: 2005, 2009  
**Finding God** – Loyola: 2005

Texts found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* but not on the Diocesan list, may be used as supplemental materials.

It must be noted that the *Baltimore Catechism* is not on the Ad Hoc Committee list. In his Apostolic Letter, *Fidei Depositum*, Pope John Paul II states that the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the “sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion” (FD #3). The *Baltimore Catechism* was a local catechism, written prior to the universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and not flowing from it. Thus, the *Baltimore Catechism* is not in conformity with *Fidei Depositum*.

The diocese has also issued Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines for the Junior High level. These guidelines focus on three of the six tasks of catechesis during grade seven, and the remaining three during grade eight. The diocese recommends using one of the two following textbook series for use in the Junior High catechetical classroom. Either textbook series may be chosen based on the needs and abilities of the students. The same textbook may be used through both grade seven and eight.

***The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (Second Edition)***

St. Mary’s Press, 2008

The content of this text is more in-depth, and written at a more difficult reading level. It is preferable to use this text if the students are able.

***The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers***

St. Mary’s Press, 2009

This text is structured similarly to *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, but at a simplified reading level.

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