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Mini In-service Session Two

Blueprints: Planning and Preparation

(pp. 7–12)

Focus

Preparation and planning are the foundation of effective lessons.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, catechists will be able to identify key strategies for planning an effective catechetical lesson.

Plan

1. Arrange the catechists into pairs and have everyone share his or her most recent vacation experience. Ask them to describe what went according to plan and what did not.
2. After they are finished sharing, invite a few volunteers to share their experiences with the whole group.
3. Point out that preparation and planning are a very big part of the vacation experience and that, even with the best planning, sometimes things can go wrong.
4. Explain that, when it comes to teaching lessons, preparation and planning are crucial. Describe each lesson as if it were a journey—a spiritual vacation—that requires detailed planning and preparation.
5. Invite some of the more experienced catechists to share how they prepare and plan for a lesson.



6. Use the “Skills, Tips, and Practical Advice for Planning and Preparation” on pages 9–11 of *The Catechist's Toolbox* to highlight the following details:
 - a. Long-Range Planning
 - b. Get to Know Your Text and Your Participants
 - c. Examine the Teacher Notes in the Catechist Manual
 - d. Visually Imagine Yourself Teaching the Lesson
 - e. Make Adjustments to Fit the Needs of Your Participants
 - f. Know Your Learning Outcomes (Objectives)
 - g. Follow a Catechetical Process
 - h. Get Your Materials Ready
 - i. Have Plan B Ready
 - j. Overplan
 - k. Pray
7. Go through the catechist manual of the catechetical series you are using to highlight key “ingredients” for effective lesson planning. Point out any online lesson planning provided at your publisher’s Web site.
8. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer found on page 12 of *The Catechist's Toolbox*.

Encourage your catechists to visit www.catechistsjourney.com for an opportunity to companion with other catechists.



Mini In-service Session Three

Socket and Wrench Set: Finding Activities That Fit

(pp. 13–16)

Focus

We select learning activities that are the best vehicle for achieving our learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, catechists will be able to identify various learning activities and describe how and when they are best used.

Plan

1. Select a significant tourist attraction that is a fairly long distance from the location at which you are gathered.
2. Arrange the catechists into pairs and have them identify different ways that they can get to this destination (drive, fly, take a train, sail, take a bus, etc.) and which way they would recommend.
3. Next, invite the pairs to share their ideas with the group. Ask people why they might prefer one method over another.
4. Point out that many factors can go into what method of travel is selected: cost, number of children, age of children, health issues, etc.
5. Emphasize that, when planning a lesson, there are a variety of ways to achieve the stated goals (learning outcomes) of the lesson and that there are also many factors to consider when selecting the best method for doing so.



6. Use the notes on pages 14–15 of *The Catechist's Toolbox* to expand upon the following ideas:
 - a. **Review Your Learning Outcomes**
 - b. **Review the Age, Gender, and Spiritual Maturity of Your Group**
 - c. **Consult a List of Possible Learning Activities** (such as on pp. 18–23 of *The Catechist's Toolbox*).
 - d. **Select an Appropriate Activity and See if It Fits**
 - e. **Select an Alternate Activity**
7. Invite experienced catechists to share some of the various types of learning activities that they use and for what purposes.
8. As a large group, brainstorm some of the varieties of ways in which Jesus taught: possible answers include parables, miracles, discourses, and symbolic actions—such as washing feet, discussions at meals, and so on.
9. Encourage the catechists to get to know a variety of learning activities as well as how to effectively use them and what situations they are best suited for.
10. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer on page 16 of *The Catechist's Toolbox*.

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Mini In-service Session Four

Color Charts: Selecting Learning Activities

(pp. 17–24)

Focus

We utilize a variety of methods in our catechetical sessions.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, catechists will be able to describe how to effectively use a variety of learning activities.

Plan

1. Bring in some color charts from a paint store or a large box of crayons with a number of color selections and show them to the group.
2. Tell the catechists that they have been chosen to redecorate the room in which they teach and that they can choose the colors for the walls and carpets. Invite volunteers to share what colors they would select.
3. After hearing from a few volunteers, tell the catechists that selecting learning activities is similar to selecting colors for room decorating. Using the notes on page 18 of *The Catechist's Toolbox*, emphasize the importance of the following:
 - a. Become thoroughly familiar with the various learning activities available.
 - b. View the activities in action.
 - c. Review the learning outcomes.



- d. **Keep all the materials you need organized and accessible.**
4. Next, divide the catechists into the following groups (the corresponding pages of *The Catechist's Toolbox* are shown in parentheses):
 - a. **Memorizing or "Taking to Heart"** (p. 18)
 - b. **Speaking and Singing** (p. 19)
 - c. **Writing** (p. 20)
 - d. **Role-Playing and Dramatizing** (p. 21)
 - e. **Playing Games** (p. 21)
 - f. **Drawing and Art** (p. 22)
 - g. **Audiovisuals** (p. 23)
5. Have each group go over the material on the corresponding pages of *The Catechist's Toolbox*. Prepare to summarize the rationale behind their assigned type of activity and give a few examples of how to do each type of activity.
6. Invite catechists who have used some of the activities and techniques described above to share their own experiences and strategies for effective use.
7. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer on page 24 of *The Catechist's Toolbox*.

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