

The Process of Evangelization

Here is an outline of each individual stage of the evangelization process, the audience for which it is intended, the methodology that is best for working with this group of people in each stage, and typical opportunities in the life of a catechetical program for engaging people in each stage.

Stage	Audience	Methodology	My Ministry
1. Pre-Evangelization	Nonbelievers Those indifferent to the gospel Those who follow other religions Children of believers Those who live on the margins of Christian life Seekers/inquirers	Relationship building / Friendship Building on human needs such as love, security and acceptance	Registration Parent nights Sacramental preparation Catechetical Sunday Prospective classroom Aides or hall monitors
2. Initial Proclamation or Missionary Preaching	Nonbelievers Those indifferent to the gospel Those who follow other religions Children of believers Those who live on the margins of Christian life Seekers/inquirers	Kerygmatic proclamation Storytelling Focusing on the person of Jesus Christ	Parent nights Sacramental preparation Retreat ministry One-on-one exchanges Small groups
3. Initiatory Catechesis	Catechumens Those who are coming to the Catholic faith from another religion Catholics who need to complete their initiation Catholics who are unfamiliar with the teachings of the church, including youth and young adults	Introduction to the life of faith Introduction to the liturgy and the sacramental life of the church Introduction to the charity of the people of God	Faith-formation students Parents Sacramental preparation Teaching masses Adult faith formation Sponsors/godparents
4. Mystagogical or Postbaptismal Catechesis	Baptized Christians	Ongoing study and exploration of: Prayer Missionary activity Celebration of the sacramental life	Adult faith formation Sponsors/godparents Catechists Parents
5. Permanent or Continuing Catechesis	Believers	Systematic presentation of the truths of the faith and Christian life	Adult faith formation Sponsors/godparents Catechists Parents

Questions for Reflection

List three ways you can reach out to people in the pre-evangelization stage of the process.

6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

How has initial proclamation or missionary preaching been incorporated into my faith-formation program?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How has our faith-formation program made provisions for groups that combine young people who need initial catechesis with those who need more advanced catechesis in the same class?

Addressing the Six Tasks of Catechesis with Children

In his book *A Well-Built Faith* (Loyola Press, 2008), Joe Paprocki uses the acronym *HELP* to talk about the four pillars of our faith and the corresponding four sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Pillars	Section of the CCC
H old on to our faith	Creed
E xpress our faith	Liturgy and Sacraments
L ive our faith	Moral Life
P ray our faith	Prayer

Adding *ME* to this acronym gives us two additional tasks of catechesis:

- M**entor our faith: form apprenticeships in Christian living
- E**vangelize our faith: promote a missionary spirit

1. Hold On to Our faith: Creed

Contextualize the Creed for younger children by speaking to them about the apostles. Encourage them to “spiritually adopt” one of the apostles and find out more about that person. The Creed contains lot of information and can be challenging to memorize, so using an activity can help. Try cutting the Creed into strips to form puzzle pieces, then give each child a bag with a set of puzzle pieces and have him or her try to put the pieces in order. Make it engaging!

2. Express Our Faith: Liturgy and Sacraments

Many children and youth find a church space interesting even if they can’t understand all the architectural details. Take them to the church often, beginning or ending your session with prayer. Conduct a “church search” or a walk through the Mass just for them. If your parish has stained-glass windows, consider taking pictures of them, sharing the meaning of each window with children, and inviting children to draw and color their own versions of the windows. Teach older children the symbols and metaphors used by the artist so that they can learn to “read” stained-glass windows. Consider a field trip to a neighboring church to discover similarities and differences between windows.

3. Live Our Faith: Moral Life

Contextualize the moral virtues by referencing specific stories and people in the Bible. Here are some ideas:

Virtues	Scripture
Honesty, bravery, sacrifice, dedication	Joseph (Genesis 37–50)
Hospitality, joyfulness, helpfulness	Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24)
Loyalty, friendship, generosity, steadfastness	The book of Ruth
Justice, charity, self-control, goodness	The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:16–34)

4. Pray Our Faith: Prayer

Introduce children to various prayer forms. One often-overlooked prayer is from the Eastern Orthodox tradition and is called the Jesus Prayer (or the Prayer of the Heart). The Jesus Prayer is very simple: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Coupled with synchronized breathing, this powerful prayer introduces young people to Christian contemplative prayer and meditation.

5. Mentor Our Faith: Form Apprenticeships in Christian Living

Assign younger children a “big sister” or “big brother” prayer partner at the beginning of the year. This is especially important if there are new children who join the program in the middle of the year or are new to the parish community. Cultivate opportunities for young people to get to know one another and have time to pray together. Post a note about big sisters and big brothers on the bulletin board each month or in the parent newsletter.

6. Evangelize Our Faith: Promote a Missionary Spirit

If your parish has a sister parish, consider reaching out to that parish to assign pen pals. Classes can exchange information on what being Catholic is like in their respective communities. Have children write letters or organize a mission drive for families to collect supplies needed in the sister or mission parish.

Speak of the work of the missions often. Include mission work in the prayers of the parish and ask young people to keep those who work in the missions in prayer.

For specific information on the missions and how your faith formation program can support them, introduce catechists and children to the Missio app created by the Pontifical Mission Societies and launched by Pope Francis in 2013.