

Family Catechetics

HOME, PARISH, SCHOOL

Family Catechetics is the Church's recipe for handing on the faith, especially in a Godless age.

It depends on God's recipe for society, the family, God's own institution, and founded in the marriage of a man and a woman. The Devil hates the whole lot!

Sydney's Archbishop Michael Kelly re-mandated the *Old Green Catechism* on 11th August, 1939, saying:-...

the supreme obligation of each Pastor, and of every parent, to have the lessons taught to their respective children in the FAMILY, in the CHURCH and in the SCHOOL.

Note how **family catechetics** comes even before **parish instruction**, let alone Catholic Schools.

The *Catholic Family Catechism* was conceived in my mind in 1975, gestated in hard labour throughout 1980, and born into persecution in 1981, It was first and foremost **designed for Family Catechetics**,

Such a catechism of questions & answers is a skeleton. For 45 years, much catechesis has been spineless because, like a jellyfish, it lacked a skeleton.

Moreover, a skeleton is not sufficient by itself. It must be taught **by a believer** and with participation in a **worshipping community**, i.e. by parents who take their young disciples to Mass on Sundays.

Catechisms with questions & answers are of their nature, "**clear, brief and easily assimilated by all**" — as Pope John Paul II said, describing "a suitable catechism for families" in *The Christian Family in the Modern World* §39 (*Familiaris Consortio*).

CATHOLIC FAMILY CATECHISM Disciples' Edition

- a **syllabus** for simple coverage of all Catholic basics;
- **flexible** to use: suits *all* styles of teaching: e.g.
- **talk/discuss**, chalk-&-talk, power point presentation;
- useful with or even without **memorization**;
- usable with or even without **written -work**;
- teachable by **older siblings** (it does them good, too);
- in the car or in the kitchen

UNIQUE COMBINATION OF TRAITS in CFC DE II:-

- Has Q&As **easy** to read aloud, understand, memorize.;
- Answers **repeat the question**;
- Answers, not the questions, in **bold print**;
- Answers set out in **sense lines** (- "thought lines"),
- **Singable**, and suits a variety of chants;
- **Rhythmic prose**, alliteration, assonance etc.

FURTHER FEATURES:-

- Implements *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §22;
- **Sub-headings** (= terse summaries) with every Q&A,
- **Pictures** on every double-page, plus some diagrams;
- **Bible text for every Q&A**, plus lesser texts;
- Also **further Bible texts** to look up and write out;
- **Cross-referenced** internally by topics, by pictures,
- **Explanatory notes** and Table of contents;
- **Indices** for topics and pictures;
- Appendices include **How to Teach, How to Learn**;
- **Priced low at \$5** — no royalties to the author.

SYSTEMATIC AND/OR INFORMAL?

- **Planned home-lessons** are really needed sometimes.
- **Casual instruction** helps and is much better than none.
- **Opt for "both/and"** rather than "either/or"
- **Teach one or more** at once as seems best,
- **Enlist older siblings** to share the catechetical work,
- Explain/discuss all **sacred ceremonies**.
- Explain the **sacred objects**, discuss the sermon.
- Better to light one small candle than curse the dark.

ALWAYS ENRICHMENTS

- **Sing** doctrinal hymns in lounge, kitchen, car etc
- **Learn a hymn each week**, or at least, one verse.
- **Learn/recite/chant** an OT/NT Bible text weekly.,.
- **Credo/Sacrament formulas/Commandments** etc.
- **Write** — the hand and eye help reinforce the ear.
- **Dictation, copying**, creative composing, etc.
- **Pictures**, specially for beginners, at home, in church.
- Also **draw your own** pictures, also diagrams.
- **Church history**, beginning With Bible History.
- **Lives of saints** and **biographies** of the faithful.
- **Home library** (suggest a parish library to the priest).
- **Gather monthly** with other families: invite a priest.
- **Get ideas** from a priest — what to do, what to avoid.

OTHER SIMPLE CATECHISMS

- Short **Q&A Catechisms** by Frs O'Neill & Durham,
- **Workbooks on Sacraments** by Fr Peter Murphy.
- **For Mind and Memory** by Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett.
- More-detailed 500 Q&As in *CFC Apostles' Edition II* are harder to memorize but still good for brevity.

CHECK LIST for family catechetics

- **Make it live**: put flesh and organs on the bare bones.
- **Talk and discuss**; ask and answer questions.
- Pope's **Memorization List** (CFC DE II back cover).
- **Making prime time** for teaching the Gospel of God.
- **Revision**: teach, revise and revise again: then add,..

PROGRAMME OF LIFE

- **Family prayers**, especially grace at meals.
- **Bedside prayers** morning and night, and kneeling.
- **Holy Mass** at least on Sundays.
- Devoutly prepare for each Holy Communion.
- **Friday Penance** — abstinence from meat is best,
- Minimum of monthly **Confession**.
- Live the **liturgical calendar** of the Year of Grace.
- Like **Our Lady**, hear the Word of God and keep it.
- **Duties** of our state-in-life — the Will of God.
- **Pray by working**, studying, being patient and kind.

SINCERITY

- **Your deeds** are shouting louder than your words.
Practise **apostolate** to sick/shy/lonely: greet them!
- Practise **smiling**: show Gospel-goodwill on your face!

**May I have an inheritance with all those
who have faithfully ministered the Word of God
from the beginning.**

**May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips
that I may worthily and fitly proclaim His Gospel
FAMILY CATECHETICS in every Catholic home!**

An Alternative to "Schooling in Schools": Homeschooling

SCHOOLING tends to get equated with education but it only contributes a less important part.

Vatican II's *Declaration on Christian Education* assigns education to parents. Its §§ 1-4 are on a bringing up as a human being and as a Catholic Christian.

That is why a Catholic upbringing always includes Family Catechetics in every Catholic home.

Flowing from the primary and ongoing work of parents, Vatican II treats schools in §§5-12: thus §5:-

Among the various organs of education the school is of outstanding importance. In nurturing the **intellectual faculties which is its special mission...**

Moreover, (the principle of subsidiarity applies: teachers help parents to carry out their duties and must not usurp them. This is particularly clear in §8:

Above all they [teachers in schools] should work in close co-operation with the parents.

In the entire educational program they should, together with the parents, make full allowance for the difference of sex and for the particular role which Providence has appointed to each sex in the family and in society.

FREE, COMPULSORY, SECULAR

"Free, compulsory, secular" can be an insidious mantra of diabolic deceit, that sound fair, but is not.

Free pretends to mean no school fees, but even in government schools there are levies on this and that. Besides, until effective protest came from Catholic taxpayers, non-government schools were not free at all.

Compulsory negates freedom. It might have meant that non-government schooling was illegal, Until now it has not, though in the 1930s, the NSW Teachers' Federation wanted all non-government schools closed down. Even now it is best to defend, by advertizing its advantages, homeschooling from any new threats.

Secular means that government imposed relativism in faith and morals. It pretends religion and morality are just private opinions which an individual must keep to himself. Governments can corrupt civil rule into "government by decree" rather than government by law, whereas no civil law makes sense if it conflict with the Natural Moral Law. Sec Cicero, *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition II* p. 113, and *Apostles' Edition II* p. 101 (with same pages in first editions).

The mantra of "Free, Compulsory, Secular" is akin to another diabolic deceit, the mantra of the French Revolution, **Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**:-

• Liberty inevitably led to the gravest *inequalities*.

Compulsory equality meant *no liberty*, no choice.

• Fraternity meant no liberty for politically incorrect aristocrats. Nor was there liberty or equality for the first wave of French Revolutionaries when they were guillotined by the second wave — "wolf eats wolf,"

LEGAL ALTERNATIVE IN AUSTRALIA

Homeschooling is currently legal in all Australian states. Interestingly it was Hitler who, in 1937, made it illegal in Germany and that has never been rescinded.

HOMESCHOOLING simply extends home-educating to the intellectual faculties as well.

In Victoria, Catholic homeschoolers prefer "home-educating" to avoid their home-tutoring being evaluated by the more restricted outlook of "schooling in schools".

Tutoring is a good Bible word implying one-to-one; cf "home-maker as a richer term than "housewife".

ARE PARENTS QUALIFIED TO TEACH?

Yes, mostly they are, because of:

- their own schooling/post-schooling courses/degrees.
- ongoing reading/study of curriculum/content/method;
- cumulative experience of *how to succeed* at it;
- specialized skills developed in tutoring ages 2-20;
- successfully married & bringing up children for years;
- unique interest in their welfare in body & soul;
- God's grace of state in the Sacrament of Matrimony;
- proven success: pupils get employment and uni, entry,

Classroom teachers are professionals for classes of 25-30 pupils of varied ability, interest, effort. But diverse ability, interest, effort are tutored more creatively one-to-one. Home techniques can induce pupils to *work on their own* with texts, "living books" and internet, a better preparation for tertiary study,

WHAT ABOUT SOCIALIZATION?

Socialization means getting on well with parents, siblings, cousins, neighbours and strangers young and old Big families hold out welcoming hands to smaller. Indeed, some parents give their **first reason for home-schooling as socialization**. USA studies show home-tutored pupils are often better socialized, more courteous, secure and 'open' than pupils at ordinary schools.

Champion of Christian homeschooling in the USA, psychologist Raymond Moore, found that schools **do not socialize children, rather they make them 'peer dependent'**, i.e. subservient, enslaved. Peers at school can reduce, usurp, even negate parental influence, and the victims begin to relate less well to their older and younger siblings at home.

Yes, children do need peer friendships outside their family. Homeschoolers get them with cousins, home-schooled family live-in conferences and neighbouring families. **For peers, we do not have to have schools.**

As a school, pupils easily lapse into 'human respect', i.e. thinking or speaking (even acting out) false or ignoble ideas lest they lose esteem in the eyes of peers — like a crowd lowering one's moral sensitivities. Peer pressure easily becomes psychological bullying.

HOMESCHOOLING FACT AND FICTION

The proof of a pudding is in the eating: Catholic hometutoring can **really** produce Catholic lay apostles in our pagan society. It does work for *some* families. Possibly unique in Australian fiction, homeschooling families are the setting of children's adventures in *New Boys in the Bush*; and *Bush Boys and Bush Rangers*; and *Bush Boys on the Move*. Appendix 4 in the latter, pp.499-505, has detailed expositions of homeschooling by this Handout's author, Father James Tierney