

Syllabus
MPTTh 557 Catechesis

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Office Hours MWF 9:30 – 11:30

Meeting: August 14 – 15, 2010
Room: New Hall rm 102

Course Description: This course will include an overview of the Church's mission of catechesis in the United States as well as introductory reflections on certain practical aspects of that mission today.

Outcomes: By the end of the course, every student will

- In class discussion, define catechesis and outline basic principles for catechesis as they are exemplified in contemporary church documents and illustrated in the activities of the church.
- In small groups, examine different roles of church leaders and members in the work of catechesis.
- Identify what we can learn from education theorists and scholars of human development that will help in the development of effective catechetical programs.
- In a written essay, offer at least 2 practical ideas for effective catechesis and explain how the ideas offered relate to the overall mission of catechesis as well as to observed pastoral needs.

NOTE ON READING

There is a great deal of material listed below. As you read, concentrate on developing a vision of catechesis that includes its importance to the church, its goals, guiding principles, content, skills, and resources. As with other topics, we will not be able to get to everything that is important so try to highlight points that stand out for you in your own pastoral setting and experience.

Text: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *National Directory for Catechesis*. Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2005.

Document(s) on line

Pope John Paul II. *Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)* Available online: [WARNING TO PRINTERS – IT IS 42 PAGES LONG!] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae_en.html

[You might find it easier simply to search by the Latin title – usually the document will come up as the first hit.

See also the list given in footnote 22, p. 8, of your text for further resources.

Two short PDF files available on Deacon Website

Cavadini, John C. “Ignorant Catholics: The Alarming Void in Religious Education.” 131/7 (April 9, 2004): 12 - 14

Nelson, Suzanne, Mary Beaudoin, and Rob Maro. “Five Core Methodologies for Catechesis.” *New Theology Review* 13/1(February, 2010) 68 – 78.

Preliminary writing assignment: Please bring three copies with you. You will turn in one and use the others for small group discussion.

In 2 – 3 pages typed, double- spaced (no more), describe your own experience of catechesis. In the first paragraph, give the general overview of your experience – when, in what setting, etc.

Then comment on at least some of the following?

What did you learn? What doctrines and moral precepts were stressed?

What role did the following play in your catechesis: Scripture, the Sacraments, the Commandments, the Creeds, prayer (formal and informal, communal and personal), discussion, asking questions, service, desire to change the world.

What do you recall as highlights and lowlights of your experience and why?

What changes have you seen in the church’s approach to catechesis during your lifetime?

What concerns do you have as you consider the church’s mission of catechesis today?

You may write this paper either before you complete your reading or after you do so. Either way, I will look for 5 specific references to the readings that seem to relate to your concerns – either affirming or challenging what you thought before you read. If you do your writing first, you may write the references by hand in the margins. This is not a formal essay and does not need footnotes or works cited.

Final written assignment: (I would like to receive all of these by Mon., Aug. 30. I believe it would be to your advantage to complete the assignment by then so that you can concentrate on the reading for the Sept. course. However, please ask if you need more time)

In 3 - 4 pages, typed and double spaced, discuss a practical idea you have for providing effective catechesis for a particular age group in your parish situation. In the paper, first describe your idea being as specific as you can. Second, describe the pastoral need that is addressed by your suggestion. It might be a good idea to address one or more of the concerns that you spoke about in your preliminary reflection. Then, discuss how your suggestion integrates principles we have found in our reading and discussion. Finally, discuss where you would need further ideas and/or what people and skills would be needed to put your idea into practice. Those of you who engage in catechesis already, PLEASE feel free to write about something you already try to practice and how it is affirmed by our class reading and discussion.

Topics for Discussion/Presentations

Catechesis as we can see it around us: strengths and needs

Catechesis and the mission of the Church

Catechesis and the content of the faith

Catechesis and cultural context

Catechesis, human development, and witness of the catechist

Educational principles.

Resources