

“The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that the first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life.”

–General Directory for Catechesis #226

Parish catechetical programs should meet the needs of children with disabilities and diverse learners. Best teaching practices include flexible grouping, adaptive materials, and natural supports. Classroom formats include:

- Typical Classroom: student participates in a typical classroom with peers without extra help or adaptations.
- Classroom Supports: student participates in a typical classroom with adapted material, a catechist aide, or adapted material.
- Learning Support Classroom: student participates in small group learning with adapted curriculum.
- Individualized instruction: a student is catechized independently, and joins peers for prayer, liturgies, and special activities.
- It is important to note that the U.S. Bishops ***recommend that persons with disabilities should participate in a typical classroom with their peers as much as possible.***

Parish catechetical and sacramental preparation programs may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities, though, as much as possible, persons with disabilities should be integrated into the ordinary programs. They should not be segregated for specialized catechesis unless their disabilities make it impossible for them to participate in the basic catechetical program. Even in those cases, participation in parish life is encouraged in all ways possible.

- Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, Revised Edition, USCCB, 2017, par.5.

- ❖ All baptized children are entitled to the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.
- ❖ Curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children.
- ❖ The timing and frequency of instruction can be adapted to meet individual needs.
- ❖ Memorization of prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.) is not a requirement for reception of sacraments.
- ❖ The Sacrament of Reconciliation may and often should be received later.

Meet Us

Experiences we have had

Identification of learning differences has increased-autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder, mental health issues, etc.

Parent desires have not changed

First thing needed-open heart and willingness to see this child as a child of God

Next is a conversation with you Parish Catechetical Director to determine goals

Then a conversation with parent(s) to learn more about the student-How does child best learn? Visual, auditory, hands on, music, art, etc.

Resources

National Catholic Partnership on Disability ncpd.org

www.FindingGod.com/Adaptive Catechism for Children with Special Needs

The Adaptive Teacher: Faith-Based Strategies to Reach and Teach Learners with Disabilities. John E. Barone and Charleen Katra, Loyola Press (available on Amazon)

USCCB Catechesis with people with Disabilities

Parents

Educators who have experience with learners with special needs that are members of the parish

Ascension Press

- ***Received: Your Journey to First Communion***
- ***Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation***