



The Pastoral Center

Pastoral ministers serving pastoral ministers

What Will Not Work This Year

Making assumptions about how you can gather. Even if the government and diocese allow you to gather in large groups all year, your families may not feel comfortable doing so.

Trying to replace parents. This does not work in ANY year. Study after study point to the fact that parents who talk about faith and are involved in their children's faith lives, are much more likely to have kids who remain Catholic long-term.

Treating parents like your catechists. Many parents do not have the commitment, confidence, or knowledge to suddenly start teaching a catechism class. On the other hand, they are the experts on their own kids. They need support!

Assuming parents will prepare. Many parents don't have the time or motivation to prepare, especially this year when many are helping their kids with distance learning on other subjects.

Assuming families will stick with it. One of the top risks this year is that families will sit things out or give up once they give it a try. If the process is not appealing to them, they'll stop.

A doctrine-first approach. It is essential to teach about our faith tradition, but we need to remember that faith is not an academic subject. Drawing parents and children closer to each other, to Christ, and to the Church is even more crucial. Without evangelization, there is little interest to learn more.

Textbooks, digital or not. Most parents are intimidated by the heavy content of textbooks, especially all at once. They're also not interested in helping their child with one more academic remote learning subject.

What Can Work This Year

Embracing the unknown. Choose a flexible process and a tool that will work well in any setting: at-home, in-parish, virtual, and hybrid models. You will most likely use a mix of settings.

Putting parents at the center. This year that we call the "Year of the Domestic Church" is a huge opportunity to fix what is wrong with our catechetical model. We have a chance to shift parents into an active role that will make a big difference.

Coaching parents from where they are at. We need to form parents and help them practice sharing faith with their kids. That means using a process designed specifically to empower parents to pass on faith to their own children.

Guiding parents in the moment. Use tools that offer clear, step-by-step instructions that will coach parents along the way without the burden of advanced preparation.

Offering a process families will love. Nothing delights us more than getting parent feedback on our resources saying they were "helpful," "useful," "worthwhile," "relevant," and "fun."

A relationship-first approach. Children first learn about God through family and the example of their parents. Helping families set aside time to focus on each other and how faith makes a difference in their lives is a gift. This is the fertile ground in which effective catechesis happens (in the same session).

Interactive handouts that drive conversation. We've found great success at giving families compact handouts with everything they need for a session. They are designed to bring families together through conversation and fun activities.