

**Further Reading for Session 10: How can we help?**  
**From the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC 154-155)**  
**Memorization in catechesis**

154. Catechetics forms part of that "memory" of the Church which vividly maintains the presence of the Lord among us. Use of memory, therefore, forms a constitutive aspect of the pedagogy of the faith since the beginning of Christianity. To overcome the risk of a mechanical memorization, mnemonic learning should be harmoniously inserted into the different functions of learning, such as spontaneous reaction and reflection, moments of dialogue and of silence and the relationship between oral and written work.

In particular, as objects of memorization, due consideration must be given to the principal formulae of the faith. These assure a more precise exposition of the faith and guarantee a valuable common doctrinal, cultural and linguistic patrimony. Secure possession of the language of the faith is an indispensable condition for living that same faith. Such formulae, however, should be proposed as syntheses after a process of explanation and should be faithful to the Christian message. To be numbered amongst them are some of the major formulae and texts of the Bible, of dogma, of the liturgy, as well as the commonly known prayers of Christian tradition: (*Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary...*).

"The blossoms—if we may call them that—of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memoryless catechesis. What is essential is that texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and on the community level".

155. Again, more importantly, the learning of the formulae of the faith and their profession must be understood in the traditional seed-bed or context of the *traditio* and the *redditio*, for which the handing on of the faith in catechesis (*traditio*) corresponds to the response of the subject during the catechetical journey and subsequently in life (*redditio*).

This process encourages a greater participation in received truth. That personal response is correct and mature which fully respects the datum of faith and shows an understanding of the language used to express it (*biblical, liturgical, doctrinal*).

**From the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* of Pope John Paul II on Catechesis in Our Time (CT 55)**

**Memorization**

55. The final methodological question the importance of which should at least be referred to—one that was debated several times in the synod—is that of memorization. In the beginnings of Christian catechesis, which coincided with a civilization that was mainly oral, recourse was had very freely to memorization. Catechesis has since then

known a long tradition of learning the principal truths by memorizing. We are all aware that this method can present certain disadvantages, not the least of which is that it lends itself to insufficient or at times almost non-existent assimilation, reducing all knowledge to formulas that are repeated without being properly understood. These disadvantages and the different characteristics of our own civilization have in some places led to the almost complete suppression - according to some, alas, the definitive suppression - of memorization in catechesis. And yet certain very authoritative voices made themselves heard on the occasion of the fourth general assembly of the synod, calling for the restoration of a judicious balance between reflection and spontaneity, between dialogue and silence, between written work and memory work. Moreover certain cultures still set great value on memorization.

At a time when, in non-religious teaching in certain countries, more and more complaints are being made about the unfortunate consequences of disregarding the human faculty of memory, should we not attempt to put this faculty back into use in an intelligent and even an original way in catechesis, all the more since the celebration or "memorial" of the great events of the history of salvation require a precise knowledge of them? A certain memorization of the words of Jesus, of important Bible passages, of the Ten Commandments, of the formulas of profession of the faith, of the liturgical texts, of the essential prayers, of key doctrinal ideas, etc., far from being opposed to the dignity of young Christians, or constituting an obstacle to personal dialogue with the Lord, is a real need, as the synod fathers forcefully recalled. We must be realists. The blossoms, if we may call them that, of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory - less catechesis. What is essential is that the texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and the community level.

The plurality of methods in contemporary catechesis can be a sign of vitality and ingenuity. In any case, the method chosen must ultimately be referred to a law that is fundamental for the whole of the Church's life: the law of fidelity to God and of fidelity to man in a single loving attitude.

### ***From the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1691-1698)***

#### **PART THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST**

1691 "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

1692 The Symbol of the faith confesses the greatness of God's gifts to man in his work of creation, and even more in redemption and sanctification. What faith confesses, the sacraments communicate: by the sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become "children of God," "partakers of the divine nature."<sup>3</sup> Coming to see in

the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life "worthy of the gospel of Christ."<sup>4</sup> They are made capable of doing so by the grace of Christ and the gifts of his Spirit, which they receive through the sacraments and through prayer. 1693 Christ Jesus always did what was pleasing to the Father, and always lived in perfect communion with him. Likewise Christ's disciples are invited to live in the sight of the Father "who sees in secret," in order to become "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

1694 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, Christians are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord. Following Christ and united with him, Christians can strive to be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love" by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the "mind . . . which is yours in Christ Jesus," and by following his example.

1695 "Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God," "sanctified . . . (and) called to be saints," Christians have become the temple of the Holy Spirit. This "Spirit of the Son" teaches them to pray to the Father and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear "the fruit of the Spirit" by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation. He enlightens and strengthens us to live as "children of light" through "all that is good and right and true."

1696 The way of Christ "leads to life"; a contrary way "leads to destruction." The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: "There are two ways, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference."

1697 Catechesis has to reveal in all clarity the joy and the demands of the way of Christ. Catechesis for the "newness of life" in him should be:

- a catechesis of the Holy Spirit, the interior Master of life according to Christ, a gentle guest and friend who inspires, guides, corrects, and strengthens this life;
- a catechesis of grace, for it is by grace that we are saved and again it is by grace that our works can bear fruit for eternal life;
- a catechesis of the beatitudes, for the way of Christ is summed up in the beatitudes, the only path that leads to the eternal beatitude for which the human heart longs;
- a catechesis of sin and forgiveness, for unless man acknowledges that he is a sinner he cannot know the truth about himself, which is a condition for acting justly; and without the offer of forgiveness he would not be able to bear this truth;
- a catechesis of the human virtues which causes one to grasp the beauty and attraction of right dispositions towards goodness;
- a catechesis of the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, generously inspired by the example of the saints; -a catechesis of the twofold commandment of charity set forth in the Decalogue;
- an ecclesial catechesis, for it is through the manifold exchanges of "spiritual goods" in the "communion of saints" that Christian life can grow, develop, and be communicated.

1698 The first and last point of reference of this catechesis will always be Jesus Christ himself, who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." It is by looking to him in faith that Christ's faithful can hope that he himself fulfills his promises in them, and

that, by loving him with the same love with which he has loved them, they may perform works in keeping with their dignity:

I ask you to consider that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head, and that you are one of his members. He belongs to you as the head belongs to its members; all that is his is yours: his spirit, his heart, his body and soul, and all his faculties. You must make use of all these as of your own, to serve, praise, love, and glorify God. You belong to him, as members belong to their head. and so he longs for you to use all that is in you, as if it were his own, for the service and glory of the Father.

***From the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC 233-252)***

**CHAPTER II**

***Formation for the service of catechesis***

**Pastoral care of catechists in a Particular Church**

233. To ensure the working of the catechetical ministry in a local Church, it is fundamental to have adequate pastoral care of catechists. Several elements must be kept in mind in this respect. Indeed efforts must be made:

- to encourage in parishes and Christian communities *vocations* for catechesis. Today, because the needs of catechesis are so varied, it is necessary to promote different kinds of catechists. "There is therefore a need for specialised catechists". In this respect selection criteria must be established;
- to try to provide a certain number of *full time catechists* so that these can devote their time intensely and in a more stable way to catechesis, in addition to fostering *part-time catechists* who are likely to be more numerous in the ordinary course of events;
- to organize a *more balanced distribution of catechists*, among the various groups who require catechesis. Awareness of the needs of adult catechesis and catechesis for young people, for example, can help to establish a greater balance in relation to the number of catechists who work with children and adolescents.
- to foster *animators of catechetical activity* with responsibility at diocesan level, in regions and in parishes.
- to organize adequately the *formation of catechists*, both in relation to basic training and continuing formation.
- to attend to the *personal and spiritual needs of catechists as well as to the group of catechists as such*. This activity is principally and fundamentally the responsibility of the priests of the respective Christian communities.

– to *co-ordinate catechists* with other pastoral workers in Christian communities, so that the entire work of evangelization will be consistent and to ensure that catechists will not be isolated from or unrelated to the life of the community.

### **Importance of the formation of Catechists**

234. All of these tasks are born of the conviction that the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel. The instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless well used by trained catechists. Thus the adequate *formation of catechists* cannot be overlooked by concerns such as the updating of texts and the re-organization of catechesis.

Consequently, diocesan pastoral programmes must give absolute priority to the *formation of lay catechists*. Together with this, a fundamentally decisive element must be the *catechetical formation of priests* both at the level of seminary formation as well as at the level of continuing formation. Bishops are called upon to ensure that they are scrupulously attentive to such formation.

### **Nature and purpose of the formation of catechists**

235. Formation seeks to enable catechists to transmit the Gospel to those who desire to entrust themselves to Jesus Christ. The purpose of formation, therefore, is to make the catechist capable of communicating: "The summit and centre of catechetical formation lies in an aptitude and ability to communicate the Gospel message".

The christocentric purpose of catechesis, which emphasizes the communion of the convert with Jesus Christ, permeates all aspects of the formation of catechists. This aim is nothing other than to lead the catechist to know how to animate a catechetical journey of which, the necessary stages are: the proclamation of Jesus Christ; making known his life by setting it in the context of salvation history; explanation of the mystery of the Son of God, made man for us; and finally to help the catechumen, or those being catechized, to identify with Jesus Christ through the sacraments of initiation. With continuing catechesis, the catechist merely tries to deepen these basic elements. This christological perspective touches directly upon the identity of the catechist and his preparation. "*The unity and harmony of the catechist must be read in this christocentric light and built around a profound familiarity with Christ and the Father, in the Spirit*".

236. By virtue of the fact that formation seeks to make the catechist capable of transmitting the Gospel in the name of the Church, all formation has an ecclesial nature. The formation of catechists is nothing other than an assistance for them in identifying with the living and actual awareness that the Church has of the Gospel, in order to make them capable of transmitting it in his name.

In concrete terms, the catechist—in his formation—enters into communion with that aspiration of the Church which, like a spouse, "keeps pure and intact the faith of the Spouse" and which, as "mother and teacher" desires to transmit the Gospel by adapting it to all cultures, ages, and situations. This truly ecclesial quality of the transmission of the Gospel permeates the entire formation of catechists and gives to that formation its true nature.

### **The inspiring criteria of the formation of catechists**

237. An adequate conception of the formation of catechists must always take prior

note of some of the criteria which inspire and configure with varying emphases relevant to the formation of catechists:

– Firstly, it is a question of forming catechists for the need to evangelize in the present historical context, with its values, challenges and disappointments. To accomplish this task, it is necessary for catechists to have a deep faith, a clear Christian and ecclesial identity; as well as a great social sensitivity. All formation programmes must accommodate these points.

– *In formation, account must also be taken of the concept of catechesis*, proposed by the Church today. It is a question of forming catechists so as to be able to transmit not only a teaching but also an integral Christian formation, by developing "tasks of initiation, of education, and of teaching". Catechists must be able to be, at one and the same time, teachers, educators and witnesses of the faith.

– The present *catechetical moment* being lived by the Church requires catechists who can "integrate", who are capable of overcoming "unilateral divergent tendencies" and who are able to provide a full and complete catechesis. They must know how to link the dimension of truth and meaning of the faith, orthodoxy and orthopraxis, ecclesial and social meaning. Formation must contribute to the enrichment of these factors lest tensions arise between them.

– The formation of lay catechists cannot ignore the *specific character of the laity in the Church*, and cannot be regarded as merely a synthesis of the mission received by priests and religious. Rather, "their apostolic training acquires a special character precisely from the secular nature of the lay state and from its particular type of spirituality".

– Finally, the *pedagogy* used in this formation is of fundamental importance. As a general criterion, it is necessary to underline the need for a coherence between the general pedagogy of formation of catechists and the pedagogy proper to the catechetical process. It would be very difficult for the catechist in his activity to improvise a style and a sensibility to which he had not been introduced during his own formation.

### **The dimensions of formation: being, knowing, and savoir-faire**

238. The formation of catechists is made up of different dimensions. The deepest dimension refers to the very being of the catechist, to his human and Christian dimension. Formation, above all else, must help him to mature as a person, a believer and as an apostle. This is what the catechist must know so as to be able to fulfil his responsibilities well. This dimension is permeated by the double commitment he has to the message and to man. It requires the catechist to have a sufficient knowledge of the message that he transmits and of those to whom he transmits the message and of the social context in which they live. This then is the dimension of *savoir-faire*, of knowing how to transmit the message, so that it is an act of communication. The formation of the catechist tends to make of him an "educator of man and of the life of man".

### **The human, Christian and apostolic maturity of catechists.**

239. On the basis of this initial human maturity, the exercise of catechesis, by constant consideration and evaluation, allows the catechist to grow in a balanced and in a critical outlook, in integrity, in his ability to relate, to promote dialogue, to have a constructive spirit, and to engage in group work. It will cause him to grow in

respect and in love for catechumens and those being catechized: "What is this love? It is the love, not so much of a teacher as of a father, or rather of a mother. It is the Lord's wish that every preacher of the Gospel, every builder up of the Church should have this love". Formation also assumes that the faith of the catechist is fostered and nourished by the exercise of catechesis, making him thus to grow as a believer. The formation, above all, nourishes the *spirituality* of the catechist, so that his activity springs in truth from his own witness of life. Every theme covered by formation should feed, in the first place, the faith of the catechist. It is true that catechists catechize others by firstly catechizing themselves.

Formation also constantly nourishes the *apostolic consciousness of the catechist*, that is, his sense of being an evangelizer. For this reason he should be aware of and live out the concrete evangelization efforts being made in his own diocese, as well as those of his own parish so as to be in harmony with the awareness that the particular Church has of its own mission. The best way to feed this apostolic awareness is by identifying with the figure of Jesus Christ, teacher and formator of disciples by seeking to acquire the zeal which Jesus had for the Kingdom. Beginning with the exercise of catechesis, the apostolic vocation of the catechist—constantly fostered by continuing formation—will progressively mature.

### **The biblico-theological formation of the catechist**

240. Besides being a witness, the catechist must also be a teacher who teaches the faith. A biblico-theological formation should afford the catechist an organic awareness of the Christian message, structured around the central mystery of the faith, Jesus Christ.

The context of this doctrinal formation should be drawn from the various areas that constitute every catechetical programme;

- the three great eras in the history of Salvation: the Old Testament, the life of Christ and the history of the Church.
- the great nuclei of the Christian message: the Creed, the Liturgy, the moral life and prayer.

In its own level of theological instruction, the doctrinal content of the formation of a catechist is that which the catechist must transmit. For its part, "Sacred Scripture should be the very soul of this formation". (218) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* remains the fundamental doctrinal reference point together with the catechism proper to the particular Church.

241. This biblico-theological formation must contain certain qualities:

- a) In the first place, it should be of a summary nature and correspond to the message to be transmitted. The various elements of the Christian faith should be presented in a well structured way and in harmony with each other by means of an organic vision that respects the "hierarchy of truths".
- b) This synthesis of faith should be such as to help the catechist to mature in his own faith and enable him to offer an explanation for the present hope in this time of mission: "The situation today points to an ever-increasing urgency for doctrinal formation of the lay faithful, not simply for a better understanding which is natural to faith's dynamism, but also in enabling them to 'give a reason for their hope' in view of the world and its grave and complex problems".
- c) It must be a theological formation that is close to human experience and capable

of correlating the various aspects of the Christian message with the concrete life of man "both to inspire it and to judge it in the light of the Gospel". While remaining theological it must in some fashion adopt a catechetical style.

d) It must be such that the catechist "will be able not only to communicate the Gospel accurately, but also able to make those being taught capable of receiving it actively and of discerning what in their spiritual journey agrees with the faith".

### **The human sciences and the formation of catechists**

242. The catechist also acquires a knowledge of man and the reality in which he lives through the human sciences which have greatly developed in our own time. "In pastoral care sufficient use should be made, not only of theological principles, but also of secular findings, especially in the fields of psychology and sociology: in this way the faithful will be brought to a more mature living of the faith".

It is necessary for the catechist to have some contact, with at least some of the fundamental elements of psychology: the psychological dynamics motivating man; personality structure; the deepest needs and aspirations of the human heart; progressive psychology and the phases of the human life-cycle; the psychology of religion and the experiences which open man to the mystery of the sacred.

The social sciences provide an awareness of the socio-cultural context in which man lives and by which he is strongly influenced. It is therefore necessary that in the formation of catechists that there take place "an analysis of the religious situation as well as of the sociological, cultural and economic conditions to the extent that these facts of collective life can greatly influence the success of evangelization". In addition to these sciences, explicitly recommended by the Second Vatican Council, other human sciences should be used in one way or another in the formation of catechists, particularly the sciences of education and communication.

### **Various criteria which can inspire the use of human sciences in the formation of catechists**

243. These are:

a) Respect for the autonomy of the sciences: "the Church... affirms the legitimate autonomy of culture and especially of the sciences".

b) Evangelical discernment of the different tendencies or schools in psychology, sociology, and pedagogy: their values and their limitations.

c) The study of the human sciences—in the formation of catechists—is not an end in itself. Acquiring awareness of the existential, psychological, cultural and social situation of man is accomplished in the light of the faith in which man must be educated.

d) In forming catechists, theology and the human sciences should mutually enrich each other. Consequently it is necessary to avoid a situation in which these materials are converted into the only norm for the pedagogy of the faith apart from the theological criteria deriving from the divine pedagogy. While these are fundamental and necessary disciplines, they are always at the service of evangelization which is more than a human activity.

### **Pedagogical formation**

244. Together with those dimensions which refer to being and knowledge, the formation of catechists must also cultivate *technique*. The catechist is an educator who facilitates maturation of the faith which catechumens and those being catechized

obtain with the help of the Holy Spirit. The first reality of which account must be taken in this decisive area of formation is that concerning the original pedagogy of faith. The catechist is prepared or formed so as to facilitate a growth in the experience of faith, which he himself has not implanted for it is God who has sown it in the heart of man. The responsibility of the catechist is merely to cultivate this gift by nourishing it and by helping it to grow. Formation seeks to mature an educational capacity in the catechist which implies: an ability to be attentive to people, an ability to interpret or respond to educational tasks or initiatives in organizing learning activities and the ability of leading a human group toward maturity. As with any other art the most important factor is that the catechist should acquire his own style of imparting catechesis by adapting the general principles of catechetical pedagogy to his own personality.

245. More concretely: it must enable the catechist and particularly the full-time catechist to know how to organize in the group of catechists, educational activity by carefully considering the circumstances, by elaborating a realistic catechetical plan and—having drawn it up—to know how to evaluate it critically. It must be capable of animating a group by applying with discernment the techniques of group dynamics offered by psychology. This educational capacity and this "know-how" along with the knowledge, attitudes and techniques which it involves "can be better acquired if they are taught simultaneously while the apostolic works are being performed (for example, during sessions when lessons of catechesis are being prepared and tested)". The goal or ideal is that catechists should be the protagonists of their own learning by being creative in formation and not by just applying external rules. This formation must be closely related to praxis: one must start with praxis to be able to arrive at praxis.

The formation of catechists within the Christian community

246. Among the ways of forming catechists, those of their own Christian community are all important. It is in this community that catechists test their own vocation and continually nourish their own apostolic awareness. The figure of the priest is fundamental in the task of assuring their progressive maturation as believers and witnesses.

247. A Christian community can develop various types of formative activities for their own catechists:

- a) One of these is the constant fostering of the ecclesial vocation of catechists by keeping alive in them an awareness of being sent by the Church;
- b) It is also important to ensure catechists have a mature faith, through the usual means by which the Christian community educates in the faith its own pastoral workers and its more committed lay members. When the faith of catechists is not yet mature it is advisable that they should participate in a catechumenal programme designed for young people and adults. This can be organized by the community itself, or one specifically created for them.
- c) Immediate preparation for catechesis, done with a group of catechists, is an excellent means of formation especially when accompanied with an evaluation of all that has been experienced in the sessions of catechesis.
- d) Within the community other formative activities can also be realized: courses in awareness of catechesis, for example, at the beginning of the pastoral year; retreats

and living in community at the important liturgical times of the year; dissertations on more pressing and necessary themes; systematic doctrinal formation, for example, studying the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These are activities of continuing formation, which together with the personal work of the catechist, would appear very useful.

### **Schools for catechists and centres for higher learning for experts in catechesis**

248. Attendance at a *school for catechists* is a particularly important moment in the formation of a catechist. In many places such schools are organized on two levels: one for catechists who are "ordinary"; the other for those who have "responsibility for catechesis".

#### **Schools for ordinary catechists**

249. The purpose of such schools is to give an comprehensive and systematic catechetical formation of a basic nature over a period of time during which the specifically catechetical dimensions of formation are promoted: the Christian message; knowledge of man and his socio-cultural situation; the pedagogy of the faith. Such a systematic formation has notable advantages amongst which the following can be numbered:

- its systematic nature which is not so absorbed in the immediate concerns of catechetical activity;
- its quality which is assured by trained specialists;
- integration with catechists from other communities, which promotes ecclesial communion.

Institutes for those with responsibility for catechesis

250. So as to prepare those who have responsibility for catechesis, in parishes and vicariates as well as full time catechists it is useful to provide catechetical institutes either at diocesan or inter-diocesan level. Clearly, standards in these institutes will be more demanding. In addition to the courses of basic catechetical formation they will promote those specializations regarded as necessary for the particular circumstances in which they are located. It may prove opportune, even for reasons of rationalizing resources, that the orientation of such institutes be directed towards those with responsibility for various pastoral activities. In this event they can be transformed into centres of formation for pastoral workers. Commencing with a general basic formation (doctrinal and anthropological) those areas in which specialization is required should be determined in relation to the particular demands made on the various pastoral and apostolic works of the diocese in which its pastoral workers are involved.

#### **Higher institutes for experts in catechesis**

251. A higher level of catechetical formation to which priests, religious and laity might have access is of vital importance for catechesis. In this regard it is hoped that "higher institutes for training in pastoral catechetics should be promoted or founded, so that catechists capable of directing catechesis at the diocesan level, or within the area of activities to which religious congregations are dedicated, may be prepared. These higher institutes can be national or even international. They ought to function as a university so far as curriculum, length of course and requisites for admission are concerned". In addition to the formation of those who must assume responsibility

for catechesis, these institutes will also form those who teach catechesis in seminaries, houses of formation and in the catechetical schools. These institutes should devote themselves to a congruent level of research in catechesis.

252. At this level of formation there is much opportunity for fruitful co-operation between the Churches: "Here also the material aid provided by the richer Churches to their poorer sisters can show the greatest effectiveness, for what better assistance can one Church give to another than to help it to grow as a Church with its own strength?") Obviously such collaboration has due respect for the particular circumstances of poorer Churches and their responsibilities. At diocesan and inter-diocesan levels it is most useful when there is an awareness of the need to form people at a higher level, just as there is a similar need for such in other ecclesiastical activities as well as in the teaching of other disciplines.

### ***From the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC 283)***

#### **Elaboration of instruments and didactic aids for catechetical activity**

283. Along with those instruments dedicated to the orientation and general planning of catechetical activity (*analysis of the situation, plan of action, Catechetical Directory*), there are other instruments of more immediate use in catechetical activity. In the first place, mention must be made of *textbooks*, (which are placed directly in the hands of catechumens and those being catechized. Also helpful are the various catechetical *Guides* for both catechists and, in the case of the catechesis of children, for parents. *Audio-visual* aids too are important in catechesis and appropriate discernment should be exercised in their use. The basic criterion for these work aids should be that of twofold fidelity to God and to man, a fundamental principle for the whole Church. This implies an ability to marry perfect doctrinal fidelity with a profound adaptation to man's needs, taking into consideration the psychology of age and the socio-cultural context in which he lives.

In short, catechetical aids must:

- be "linked with the real life of the generation to which they are addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and questionings, struggles and hopes";
- try "to speak meaningfully to this generation";
- "really aim to give to those who use them a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, aimed at true conversion and a life more in conformity with God's will".