



RECOMMENDED CATECHETICAL TEXTBOOK GUIDE

DEPARTMENT of
EVANGELIZATION 
and CATECHESIS



OFFICE of
MARRIAGE + FAMILY



DIOCESE of
COLUMBUS

THE PURPOSE OF THE TEXTBOOK

The catechist is the most effective aspect of the parish catechetical setting. Books, resources, videos, room setups, times, places, activities, etc. are all secondary to the catechist. Holy catechists bring people to Jesus Christ and His Family, the Church not textbooks and other catechetical material.

Textbooks do play a role within the scope of any catechetical program. Effective textbooks provide catechists with abundant background, thorough explanations of Church doctrine, methodology suggestions, and resources. They provide the learner with a clear, accurate, and comprehensive exposition of the Catholic Faith. A good textbook serves as a tool to articulate, illustrate, and reinforce the living witness and explanations of the catechist. For some, a textbook may open the heart through the gateway of the intellect to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. These textbooks are considered “doctrinally sound” “faithful” or “orthodox.”

In *On Catechesis In Our Time* (CT), St. John Paul II writes,

One major feature of the catechetical renewal today is the rewriting and multiplication of catechetical books in many parts of the Church. Numerous very successful works have been produced and are a real treasure in the service of catechesis. But it must be humbly, honestly recognized that this rich flowering has brought with it articles and publications which are ambiguous and harmful to young people and the Church’s life.

In certain places, the desire to find the best forms of expression or to keep up with fashions in pedagogical methods has often enough resulted in certain catechetical works which bewilder the young and even adults, either by deliberately or unconsciously omitting elements essential to the Church’s faith, or by attributing excessive importance to certain themes at the expense of others, or, chiefly, by a rather horizontalist over-all view [not in] keeping with the teaching of the Church’s Magisterium. Therefore, it is not enough to multiply catechetical works. In order that these works may correspond with their aim, several conditions are essential:

- a) they 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;
- b) they must try to speak a language comprehensible to the generation in question;
- c) they must make a point of giving the whole message of Christ and his Church, without neglecting or distorting anything, and in expounding it they will follow a line and structure that highlights what is essential;
- d) they must 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. (CT49)

These four conditions serve to guide the evaluation of catechetical series and textbooks.

WHO NEEDS A TEXTBOOK? WHY?

Three groups need a textbook series or textbooks consistent with a curriculum of their particular purpose.

1. **Parish leaders** (Pastor, DRE, Coordinator) need the tools of a **catechetical textbook series** if their catechesis is organized into graded, separate groups or focus topics:
 - a. to provide for an orderly and systematic study of Catholicism;
 - b. to give an overview of the curriculum;
 - c. to ensure steady progress from year to year;
 - d. to provide a concrete direction and focused aid to the catechists.
2. **Catechists**, whether experienced or inexperienced, need the tool of the **manual/textbook**:
 - a. to assure that Catholic doctrine and practice are consonant with Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, most recently presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC);
 - b. to provide a sense of direction for the current lessons and a sense of continuity with previously covered materials as well as indicate future materials;
 - c. to give an overview of the work for the entire year;
 - d. to aid in developing lesson plans that are community-oriented, liturgically and theologically sound, and oriented toward service;
 - e. to suggest a variety of methodologies and resources;
 - f. to provide specific cultural understanding and subsequent needs of the student.
3. **Students** need the tool of the **textbook**:
 - a. to have a reliable guide to the doctrines of the Catholic Church;
 - b. to work in and from;
 - c. to provide stimulus and focus;
 - d. to allow for independent use;
 - e. to refer to within the family setting.



DIOCESAN TEXTBOOK AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS EVALUATION

The work of evaluation textbooks is ongoing and time-consuming. We rely heavily on the input of the Bishop's Ad Hoc Committee on the Catechism and the pastors and catechetical leaders of our diocese. The goal in recommending textbooks is:

1. To identify those textbooks and catechetical series which clearly and completely embody the doctrines of the Church.
2. To identify resource materials which most closely reflect our own Curriculum Guidelines.

The consideration of textbooks can evolve very quickly into an unproductive dialogue of "textbook wars." There is a real temptation to put too much emphasis on the choice of textbooks instead of other more important factors such as the catechist and their training. Educational research never lists the effectiveness of the textbook above 20%.

The approach employed in these pages is meant to encourage thoughtful decisions that can benefit the catechetical program of the parish. The following recommendations represent a work in progress. The Department of Catechesis welcomes the advice and experience of those who work at the parish level to help make textbook selections in the diocese.

Materials that have not been reviewed are not listed. Unlisted catechetical materials that you would like to use in your programs should be submitted for review along with a letter describing how the material reaches the above-stated two-fold goal. **Submissions should be sent to: Department of Evangelization and Catechesis 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215**

TEXTBOOK AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS EVALUATION TERMINOLOGY

The textbook series listed on the following pages has been evaluated and received one of the following ratings:

1. RECOMMENDED
2. RECOMMENDED WITH RESERVATION
3. NOT RECOMMENDED

RECOMMENDED materials are most near our diocesan curriculum guidelines.

Parish Programs

In addition to the materials designated as RECOMMENDED, certain situations such as class size, finances, catechetical models, etc. in parish settings might warrant using materials with the rating WITH (RESERVATION) SUPPLEMENTATION. Materials in both categories could be means to good catechesis.

Materials designated as NOT RECOMMENDED are not to be used for catechesis. Additional information on these NOT RECOMMENDED materials may be obtained by contacting the Department of Catechesis.

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As series and catechetical materials are created or altered, new recommendations will be issued. **Most catechetical materials are published with an “imprimatur.” An “imprimatur” signifies that the material is free of doctrinal error. It does not designate, however, that the material is doctrinally complete, systematically presented, or pedagogically appropriate.**

Additionally, an official declaration that texts are in doctrinal conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) by the USCCB’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Catechism does not address methodological or pedagogical matters. In other words, a positive finding by the Ad Hoc Committee does not necessarily constitute a pedagogical, methodological, or clear explanation of Catholic doctrine recommendation of the material.

PROCESS FOR SELECTING TEXTBOOKS

It is recognized that first, the Bishop for the diocese and then the pastor for the parish has the canonical responsibility for catechetical instruction. The pastor should participate substantively in the selection of catechetical resources, including the reviewing and approval of the catechetical books and materials to be used in their respective school and/or parish programs. A process that includes diocesan recommendations, the pastor's research, and the involvement of parents is ideal.

General Evaluation Overview

The process for evaluating textbooks and supplementary materials is conducted at two levels: diocesan and parish.

Diocesan Level

The Department of Evangelization and Catechesis and approved Theological Evaluators (Dr. Marlon De La Torre; Fr. Adam Streitenberger) by the Bishop, evaluate catechetical series and textbooks for the Diocese. Reviewed materials are rated as RECOMMENDED, WITH SUPPLEMENTATION AND NOT RECOMMENDED. Should a local parish or school program wish to consider textbooks not recommended and/or not evaluated, they must submit the material in question for evaluation to the Department of Catechesis, along with a written statement of why the material fits their particular situation. The resources are not to be used until the evaluation has been completed. Due regard to the length of time needed for such an evaluation must be taken into account by those submitting the texts.

Parish Level

The choice of a particular text is the task of the Pastor, who is the primary catechist of his parish. **The Pastor may not simply delegate this task to others unless a pastoral situation requires him to.** If necessary, the Pastor may create a committee to assist him in choosing a textbook. The pastor, with the committee's assistance, then proceeds to decide upon a series or textbook that will be used in the program. Choices are limited to the materials already recommended by the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis.

PARTICULAR PARISH EVALUATION

The following process is recommended to local parishes and schools considering a new religion textbook series or other materials:

1. Notify the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis for parish programs that you are considering a change in your present series or textbooks. We will provide the most current list of approved textbooks and catechetical series. We may also be able to provide review copies.
2. The Pastor may review the materials himself or create a committee including the DRE, curriculum coordinator, and/or catechists from each level. Parents and other interested, knowledgeable people could also participate in the committee.
3. The Pastor and the committee should read the Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines about the age level and the section entitled Purpose of Textbooks provided in this manual.
4. Discuss the positive and negative qualities in the current series in light of #3.
5. Consult the list of Diocesan recommended texts.
6. Be sure to look at all the components that comprise the series — the student text, the catechist's guide, and the other support materials to be used with the textbook.
7. Secure samples from the publishers or the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis of all the religious materials the committee wishes to examine. These samples should be given to all committee members for comparison and study. Each committee member should be particularly sensitive to how the series fulfills the criteria they have already identified. Sometimes publishers will provide workshops free of charge to introduce a catechist to their materials if a parish or school purchases the series. Find out what services are available from publishers directly.
8. Arrive at a consensus recommendation about the series or textbook a catechist hopes to adopt. The pastor makes the final selection of materials. If there is a committee, this decision is made considering the recommendations of those who have reviewed the materials.
9. When a change in the local catechetical curriculum involves a significant change in teaching style and materials, catechists should participate in appropriate in-services before implementation. Make arrangements for a catechist in-service on the new materials before beginning the school year or parish program.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

ELEMENTARY (K-8)

NOTE: Due to many publishers currently revising or creating textbook series and catechetical materials, this section is always being updated. Materials that have not been reviewed are not listed. Unlisted catechetical materials that you would like to use in your programs should be submitted for review along with a letter describing how the material reaches your catechetical needs. **Submissions should be sent to the: Department of Evangelization and Catechesis 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215**

RECOMMENDED (in alphabetical order by Publisher)

Adventure Catechism Media <https://www.adventurecatechism.com/>

Adventure Catechism Series (K-8) © 2021, 2023 (parish student text)

Apostolate for Family Consecration <https://afc.org/>

The Apostolates Family Catechism © 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011

Consecration In Truth © 2001, 2006, 2011 (School and Parish Text single edition)

Augustine Institute <https://www.wordofliferies.org>

Word of Life © 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 (K-6)

Family Formation <https://www.familyformation.net/>

Family Formation Home Lessons and Classroom Lessons © 2022

Ignatius Press <https://ignatius.com/religious-ed/>

Faith and Life © 2002-2005, 1984-1987 (K-8)

Image of God © 1986-1993

Word of Life © 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 (K-6)

Our Sunday Visitor <https://www.osv.com/parish-diocese/faith-formation/>

Alive In Christ: Discovering and Sharing the Kerygma ©2023 Parish Student Text and Parent Manual. (K-8).

Sophia Institute Press <https://sophiateachers.org/support/a-family-of-faith/>

A Family of Faith (K-8) © 2024

Spirit and Truth (K-8) © 2018, 2023

Walking with Jesus © 2023

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

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RECOMMENDED (in alphabetical order by Publisher)

Adventure Catechism Media <https://www.adventurecatechism.com/>

Adventure Catechism Series: First Reconciliation/Holy Communion ©2021

Adventure Catechism Series: Confirmation © 2021

Ascension Press <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/religious-education>

Chosen: Journey Toward Confirmation © 2016, 2022

Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation; Received: Your Journey toward First Communion © 2023

Augustine Institute <https://www.wordofliferies.org>

Signs of Grace: You are Forgiven-Preparing for First Reconciliation © 2018

Signs of Grace: You are Loved-Preparing for First Holy Communion © 2018

Signs of Grace: You are Sent © 2021

Family Formation <https://www.familyformation.net/>

Family Formation: First Communion Preparation © 2019

Family Formation: First Reconciliation Preparation © 2019

Ignatius Press <https://ignatius.com/religious-ed/>

Image of God (Mass Books and Confirmation) ©1986-1993

Midwest Theological Forum

https://www.theologicalforum.org/Category/129/The_Didache_Sacramental_Preparation_Series

The Sacrament of Confirmation: A complete preparation course and activities with parents and sponsors © 2018

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion © 2019

New Hope Publications <https://www.newhope-ky.org/>

Little Catechism of the Eucharist © 2009

The Sacrament of Confirmation © 2011, 2013

Our Sunday Visitor <https://www.osv.com/parish-diocese/faith-formation/>

Encounter with Christ, Eucharist and Reconciliation © 2016



RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

ELEMENTARY SPANISH (K-8)

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RECOMMENDED (in alphabetical order by Publisher)

Apostolate for Family Consecration <https://afc.org/>

El Catecismo para la Familia del Apotolado © 2007, 2008

Family Formation <https://www.familyformation.net/>

Family Formation: First Communion Preparation (Spanish/Bilingual) © 2019

Family Formation: First Reconciliation Preparation (Spanish/Bilingual) © 2019

Loyola Press <https://www.loyolapress.com/>

Conociendo nuestra fe católica (1-3) © 2011

Don de Dios, la Eucaristía (Primaria) © 2009, 2016

Don de Dios, la Reconciliación (Primaria) © 2009, 2016

Don de Dios, la Reconciliación y Eucaristía (Intermedio) © 2016

Encontrando a Dios (Bilingual Edition of Finding God, Ages © 2018

Encontrando a Dios (Bilingual Edition of Finding God, 1-8) © 2015

Our Sunday Visitor <https://www.osv.com/parish-diocese/faith-formation/>

¡Alelú! Crecer y celebrar con Jesús (3-4) © 2012

¡Alelú! Crecer y celebrar con Jesús (4,5) © 2010

¡Alelú! Crecer y celebrar con Jesús (K) © 2011

Faith Fusion: Knowing, Loving, and Serving Christ in the Catholic Church (Bi-lingual-Spanish) © 2016

Fusión en la fe: Conocer, amar y servir a Cristo en la Iglesia Católica © 2023

Fusión en la fe: Conocer, amar y servir a Cristo en la Iglesia Católica (6-8) © 2011

Vivo en Cristo (A-F) © 2015

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS AND CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY (K-8)

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Ruah Woods <https://www.ruahwoodsinsitute.org/parish/>

Revealed (K-5) © 2024

Rooted (6-8) © 2024