



Vision and Outcomes Statement for the National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis

A Vision for Adolescent Catechesis

Young people grow in their Catholic faith by falling in love with the person and message of Jesus Christ, and mature in faith when they let that love form and transform them within the Church, a community of disciples. Adolescent catechesis is one stage of a lifelong process of embracing the Catholic way of life that forms young disciples by empowering them to know and follow Christ in their daily lives, thus becoming leaven for the Kingdom of God in the world. The following are foundational and interdependently connected elements in this process:

- **Empowered Parents and Faith-Filled Families:** Catholic parents and families must be primary in thinking, planning, and programming so that they are empowered to develop a rich and vibrant Catholic faith within the home as domestic church. Parishes serve as lifelong partners with parents in this effort ;
- **Vibrant, Youth-Friendly Parishes:** Youth must find welcome and meaningful engagement in parishes alive with rich and vibrant faith, requiring collaboration among parish leaders working together for the renewal of parish life;
- **Fruitful Partnerships:** Because “it takes a whole church,” intentional and mutual partnerships must be formed and nurtured among parents, parishes, dioceses, Catholic schools, apostolic movements and adolescents working toward a common goal;
- **Comprehensive Ministry to Youth with Intentional and Systematic Faith Formation:** Innovative, comprehensive learning approaches and dynamic resources must be developed along with effective and well-formed adults willing to apprentice (acompañar) young people in the faith
- **Inclusion, Trust and Acceptance:** An environment of inclusion, trust and acceptance must be fostered in parishes, schools and the larger community, embracing young people and families from different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds .

This vision of adolescent catechesis calls for nothing less than re-imagining current faith formation and pastoral ministry efforts with young people and their families. It requires leaders at all levels to engage in honest assessments of current efforts and systems in order to create new relationships and patterns of ministry which work together to form disciples of Jesus Christ.

Outcomes for Adolescent Faith Formation

The effectiveness of parish, school and family efforts in adolescent faith formation can be assessed by witnessing faith communities alive with young people who demonstrate their love for God and their Catholic faith by:

1. Sustaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ supported through regular prayer, faith sharing and scripture reading.
2. Sharing the Good News through words and actions, through Christian stewardship and working for peace, justice and human dignity.
3. Participating fully, consciously, actively and regularly in the celebrations of the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.
4. Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Catholic faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.
5. Applying Catholic ethics, virtues, principles, values and social teaching to moral decision-making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.
6. Discerning and using their gifts to actively belong to and participate in the life and mission of the parish, school, and larger community.
7. Celebrating cultural/racial and ethnic diversity as a gift from God, and pursuing the development of Christian community across cultural/racial and ethnic backgrounds in their parishes, schools, and broader communities.
8. Exploring God's call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.

References:

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship and Teenagers: The Challenge of Being a Disciple*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2007.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. Washington, DC: USCC, 1997.

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith*. Washington, DC: NFCYM, 1986.



Indicators of the Outcomes of Adolescent Catechesis

Outcomes should have specific indicators, behaviors or beliefs that serve as signs of the outcome in young people. These indicators can point to growth and progress as well as serve as the starting point in developing processes and attitudes that foster the outcomes.

Outcome One: Sustaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ supported through regular prayer, faith sharing and scripture.

1. **Prayer:** The maturing adolescent believes in the power of prayer in the Christian life and prays on a regular basis.
2. **Faith Sharing:** The maturing adolescent is able to reflect theologically on life and share their Christian faith with others.
3. **Scripture Inquiry:** The maturing adolescent views the Bible as God's inspired word and utilizes it to grow in their relationship with Jesus through regular Bible study, reflection, and application.

Outcome Two: Sharing the Good News through words and actions, through Christian stewardship and working for peace, justice and human dignity.

1. **Sharing the Good News:** The maturing adolescent is able to articulate his or her faith and give a coherent witness of this faith to others.
2. **Christian Stewardship:** The maturing adolescent shares the Good News in action through a life of Christian stewardship.
3. **Peace, justice, and human dignity:** The maturing adolescent models a life that embraces the call to peace, works towards justice and champions the dignity of all humankind.

Outcome Three: Participating fully, consciously, actively and regularly in the celebrations of the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.

1. **Eucharist and Reconciliation:** The maturing adolescent is fully, consciously, actively, and regularly participating in the celebration of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
2. **Sacramental Preparation:** The maturing adolescent is living the meaning of the sacraments in their daily life.

Outcome Four: Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Catholic faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.

1. **Learning and Teaching:** The maturing adolescent is actively engaged in age-appropriate catechetical learning that utilizes experiential and participative methods.
2. **Articulating the fundamental teachings:** The maturing adolescent understands and can articulate the uniqueness of Catholic theology and teachings.

3. **Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Faith Growth:** The maturing adolescent understands that growth in faith is a lifelong journey.

Outcome Five: Applying Catholic ethics, virtues, principles, values and social teaching to moral decision- making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.

1. **Understands Catholic Moral and Social Teaching:** The maturing adolescent understands and can articulate the fundamental principles on which Catholic moral and social teaching is based upon.
2. **Consults and Applies Catholic Moral and Social Teaching:** The maturing adolescent seeks out the wisdom of the Church’s moral and social teaching and begins to incorporate a Catholic values and ethics mentality in how they live their life, make moral decisions, and interact with the world.

Outcome Six: Discerning and using their gifts to actively belong to and participate in the life and mission of the parish, school, and larger community.

1. **Discernment:** The maturing adolescent is able, through the experience of prayer and community, to discern his or her God-given gifts and the role these gifts play in the service of others.
2. **Involvement:** The maturing adolescent actively seeks out and participates in the life and mission of the parish, school, and larger community.

Outcome Seven: Celebrating cultural/racial and ethnic diversity as a gift from God, and pursuing the development of Christian community across cultural/racial and ethnic backgrounds in their parishes, schools, and broader communities.

1. **Forming communities:** The maturing adolescent belongs to a faith community that welcomes people of diverse racial and ethnic groups, and celebrates their faith traditions and heritage.
2. **Identity Development:** The maturing adolescent is developing an identity which incorporates the heritage and traditions of his or her ethnic culture within a supportive faith community.
3. **Celebration and Appreciation:** The maturing adolescent is developing an understanding of and respect for people of diverse cultures.
4. **Building Bridges:** The maturing adolescent is developing attitudes and skills for overcoming racial and ethnic prejudice and engages in acts of solidarity with cultural minority groups.

Outcome Eight: Exploring God’s call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.

1. **Exploring one’s baptismal call:** The maturing adolescent lives the vocational call to discipleship received at baptism and through prayer, reflection and discernment.
2. **Vocational state:** The maturing adolescent explores and is open to God’s call to the ordained, consecrated, married, or single life.