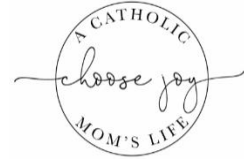


Faith in 5 – Adults Catholic Catechesis



1. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), **catechism** is a text which contain fundamental Christian truths for learning and understanding. There are two categories of catechism – **major** (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*) and **minor** (*The Baltimore Catechism*).
A **major catechism** is the point of reference for the development of the minor catechism. A **universal catechism** is a major catechism used for the development of catechism materials used throughout the world. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is intended to be universal, although never officially given this recognition.
2. **Catechism** is the book of Catholic doctrine that makes up the Catholic Faith. **Catechesis** is the instruction of religious education; the education of Catholics. **CCD** means "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine," a term that originated in Rome in 1562. CCD refers to the religious education of children who are in public schools. Whereas children who are enrolled in parochial (Catholic) schools take religion classes each day, children in public school take their catechism classes usually once a week at a parish.
3. The *Catechism* outlines what Catholics believe and presents Catholic doctrine "within the Church's history and tradition". It includes a compilation of Sacred Scripture, writings from those from the early Church, the saints, papal and liturgical documents. "The purpose of *The Catechism*:
 - a. It conveys the essential and fundamental content of Catholic faith and morals
 - b. It is a point of reference for national and diocesan catechisms.
 - c. It is a positive, objective and declarative exposition of Catholic doctrine.
 - d. It is intended to assist those who have the duty to catechize, namely promoters and teachers of catechesis". ([Source](#))
4. The Didache (60-85 AD) is the earliest known catechism. The actual word catechism was in use in the late Middle Ages. Martin Luther in 1529 made popular the question-and-answer format in his writings. The Council of Trent commissioned the first Catholic catechism, the *Roman Catechism* (1566) to identify its uniqueness from the Protestant church during the Counter-Reformation. Their hope was that the *Catechism* would be the Roman Catholic Church's official guide for instruction.
5. *The Baltimore Catechism* was a Catechism of Christian Doctrine developed as a result of the Third Council of Baltimore. The American bishops in 1829 desired a catechism specifically written for Americans. It is based on the works of St. Robert Bellarmine, SJ, who published a *Small Catechism* after the Council of Trent, which was translated into many languages. *The Baltimore Catechism* became the legitimate text for Catholic instruction in the United States from 1885 until the late 1960's.
6. There are four volumes or books of the *Baltimore Catechism*.
 - a. Number 0 – First Communion, Catholic doctrine (grades 1 and 2)
 - b. Number 1 – Basic catechism (students through 5th grade)

- c. Number 2 – Fundamentals of Faith, preparing for Confirmation (6th-9th grade)
- d. Number 3 – course of study used after Confirmation (high school)
- e. Number 4 – used for teachers of doctrine.
The Baltimore Catechism utilizes an easy question and answer format, making it ideal for children to learn the faith. Adults find this learning resource valuable also.

7. *The Baltimore Catechism* and *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are not the same. The catechisms do not differ in the doctrine they present – since the Faith is the same and does not change. They differ in terms of how it is presented.
8. “The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) brought changes to the Church and its approach to theology and catechesis” ([Source](#)). There was a call for universal holiness, ecumenism, and a need to return to the sources of the Catholic faith so that all Catholics would understand their faith identity. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is result of a recommendation made in 1985 by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. A commission was formulated at the behest of Pope St. John Paul II in 1986 to develop a compendium of Catholic doctrine. In 1992, he officially approved the definitive version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and later that year, promulgated the *Catechism* with an apostolic constitution. The *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a summarized version of the *Catechism*.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has four distinct parts:

- a. The Profession of Faith (the Creed)
- b. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (great focus on the sacraments)
- c. Life in Christ
- d. Christian Prayer

The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2005) and *YouCat* (for young people) were issued in the familiar question and answer format similar to the *Baltimore Catechism*.

9. *YouCat* is the abbreviated version of the *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2011). It can be used as a resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the Catholic faith. It is based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Their website, www.youcat.org contains many sources for helping to educate the Catholic faith and includes information on a mobile phone app where one can access quick catechism study sessions every day.
10. [Catechism in a Year](#), is a production of Ascension Press, led by Fr. Mike Schmitz. It is a self-paced study and commentary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, with a goal to completely read the *Catechism* in 365 days. It is available as a podcast and on YouTube.
11. **Why is catechism necessary?** As baptized Christians, we bear the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from our anointing of the Holy Spirit as priest, prophet and king (CCC, 783). Canon Law defines catechists as “lay members of the Christians faithful, duly instructed and outstanding in Christian life, who devote themselves to setting forth the teachings of the Gospel”. It is mission work of the Church.

Many are invited to the call of catechist. It is more than simple volunteering – it becomes a vocation, a call to serve the Church. Formal training to become a catechist would include completing diocesan requirements, attending courses on Faith Formation, and collaborating with the Director of Faith Formation and Education to become an official catechist. Parish and diocesan policies and guidelines must be adhered to.

The world today needs role-model Catholics, strong in their faith. We are a witness of faith to others. “You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all people” (2 Corinthians 3:2). Our young people need guidance and examples of holiness. Catechists should see themselves not only as fulfilling the mission of the church but have a desire to share the faith. It can be an extremely rewarding vocation - growing in faith, deepening one’s relationship with Jesus and helping others to do the same.

For further study: [Excellent information source](#) on becoming a catechist.

12. Parents also have a duty to know the Catholic Faith in order to adequately teach it to their children. Their prayerful example, support and encouragement will help develop their child’s faith and strengthen the Church.

The Great Commission

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation”.

Mark 16:15

This is a free resource! For more information, visit www.acatholicmomslife.com