

Being, Knowing, and Savoir-faire

by Jo Rotunno

The *General Directory for Catechesis* reminds us of the three most important aspects of good catechist formation: being, knowing, and *savoir-faire* (no. 238). These three qualities are reflected in the new *National Directory for Catechesis* in the criteria it lists for the initial formation of catechists (p. 237). *Echoes of Faith* intentionally attends to all three of these important aspects of formation. The *Echoes* project is divided into these same three categories: The Catechist (being), Theology (knowing), and Methodology (*savoir-faire*). These categories are being retained in the new *Echoes of Faith Plus*.

Being refers to who we are as catechists—persons intimately related to God, empowered by the Spirit to give witness to the Gospel of his son, Jesus Christ. Accordingly, those of us charged with the formation of catechists know that our first responsibility is to nurture their spiritual formation. *Roles of the Catechist* and *The Person of the Catechist* deal directly with this formation. *Getting Started as a Catechist*, while a more practical jump-start for beginning catechists, includes the witness of several lifetime catechists and reveals their respect for and dedication to their learners.

Knowing describes the importance of being well-informed about our Catholic faith—its Scriptures and tradition—and about the needs of the audience we serve. The five theology modules do this beautifully. There is a module for each pillar of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and one introducing the catechist to sacred Scripture. A module called *Introduction to the Learner* informs catechists of the developmental needs of those they will catechize.

Savoir-faire describes the “how-to” of catechesis. Sometimes these nuts and bolts are what the catechist wants to know first. Yet good catechists know that practical skills may fall flat when if are not rooted in a strong personal faith reflection and knowledge of the needs of one’s learners. There are currently four methodology modules addressing effective strategies for various elementary and junior high grade levels. This fall we will add a fifth module to this series when we introduce *Methods for Adult Faith Formation*, the first module of the new *Echoes of Faith Plus*.

Now is a good time to begin your planning for next year’s catechist formation. Don’t yield to the temptation to settle for less than the best in your catechists because you don’t think they have the time for formation, or won’t respond if you call them forth. Where would we be today if Jesus had done the same? Ask your catechists to reflect on who *they* would be today if the disciples of Jesus had not said “Yes.” If you are new to catechetical leadership or simply haven’t looked at *Echoes of Faith* for a while, consider this resource to help to make them the best that they can be.

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