

Dear Catechetical Leader:

The materials included here are meant to help you to implement the formation of a program for children who cannot, because of intellectual disability or disruptive behavior, function comfortably in a typical classroom. The typical classroom should include *all* of those children who can learn in that setting. Those who cannot should be provided with a setting and program in which they can learn.

Some children need one on one individualized instruction. That does not mean that they cannot participate in a group with other children and teachers, a group in which they can learn about Jesus and experience community. The formation of such a program means more than simply providing a teacher for a child. It means advertising that children with special needs are welcome. It means seeking out catechists who see these children as gifts rather than as disturbances. It means making room for the special child and his/her family in the parish's liturgical worship as well as in the faith formation program.

I hope that you find the materials useful. The facilitator might choose to focus the group teaching with another topic, such as The Sacraments, The Commandments, The Liturgy, the Saints, The Rosary, or whatever topic interests her and is part of the formation curriculum. Since many of the children will remain in the program over a period of years, they will eventually be exposed to many of those teachings and traditions which identify us as "Catholic".

If you have any questions, I will be happy to try to answer them. And don't forget to check the website to see the many ways we are trying to include children and adults with special needs in faith formation and parish life!

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"We are one flock that follows a single shepherd."

Sample Format for Opening Lessons: Children with Special Needs



This year, the beginning of each session for children with special needs at one of our parishes will follow material gleaned from *Our Catholic Faith: A Summary of Basic Beliefs* by Rev. John F. Barry (William H. Sadlier, Inc. copyright 2009). It is included here as a **sample**, not as a **prescription** to follow. The coordinator for children with special needs will use the text as a **guideline**. (The pages used are noted in parentheses.) The children will be given supplemental material (pictures and puzzles) from various sources, including Pauline Books and Media and Pflaum. This material will reinforce the material presented by the facilitator.

The children will meet to pray and sing together. The lesson will then be presented to the **whole** group based on the format explained above. After the group lesson, the children will go off with their teachers to do their individual work. This usually includes preparation for the sacraments. The University of Dayton materials as well as materials from Pflaum are used by the teachers for the children's individual lessons. These individual groups are small; many of them one on one or two on one.

The opening lesson provides the underpinning for the individual work which the teachers do with their children. It gives a **focus** to the year of formation. Please note that the program includes the celebration of three Liturgies and one Penance Service. This brings the children together for worship in which they can fully participate. Many of them have behavior issues. All of them are welcome to participate as fully as possible. Sample readings for an Opening Mass and Thanksgiving Mass are included, as well as a sample Penance Service which would be followed by individual confessions.

Resources:

Pauline Kids Books and Media: *Coloring and Activity Books* call 212-754-1110 for information on how to order

Pflaum Publishing Group: *The Catholic Activities for Catholic Kids*, Grades 1 to 5 (2006) www.Pflaum.com

Sadlier: *Our Catholic Faith* by Rev. Msgr. John F. Barry, P.A. (2009) www.sadlier.com

University of Dayton: call Margaret Shufflebarger (888-532-3389 or email Margaret.Shufflebarger@notes.udayton.edu for information. These books are excellent for the sacramental preparation of children with intellectual delays and disabilities.

TOPICS FOR FAITH FORMATION FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN

4:30-5:15

- Week 1 Meeting for Catechists
- Week 2 Opening session for parents, teachers and children.
Re-acquaint and Re-fresh!
- Week 3 Opening Mass in the Church at 4:30PM. Please bring your child to the Church. Pick up is from the Church. You are most welcome to stay for the Mass.
- Week 4 God created the world. He created us in his image. We are called to worship Him (8).
- Week 5 God promised to send a Savior (9).
- Week 6 There are three persons in one God; sign of the cross (10).
- Week 7 Communion of Saints; we are all called to worship God (94).
- Week 8 Jesus is the gift of the Father. He came to tell us about the Father (15-16).
- Week 9 Thanksgiving Mass in the Church. Please bring a can or box of non-perishable food for the food pantry.
- Week 10 Christmas: Birthday of the Savior. Jesus continues to be present to us in the Eucharist (20).
- Week 11 **Christmas Happening**
- Week 12 Jesus is God and man. He is our Savior who died and rose from the dead (14).
- Week 13 The Holy Spirit came to guide the apostles on Pentecost (29-30).
- Week 14 The Pope, Bishops and Pastors take the place of Jesus on earth. The Church continues to be guided by the Spirit (34).
- Week 15 Catholics worship together at Mass (58).
- Week 16 Jesus teaches us about forgiveness (82).
- Week 17 We are forgiven in the sacrament of reconciliation (83).
- Week 18 Penance Service in the Church
- Week 19 Ash Wednesday
- Week 20 Lent
- Week 21 We celebrate Holy Thursday and Good Friday.
- Week 22 We celebrate the Resurrection.
- Week 23 End of the Year Happening.
- Week 24 Closing Liturgy in the Church

Opening Mass

Readings

A Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians:

Brothers and sisters, be kind to one another, and compassionate. Forgive each other as God has forgiven you in Christ. Be imitators of God. Act as his beloved children. Live in love, just as Christ loved you.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Response is: Come. Let us follow the Lord.

All: Come. Let us follow the Lord.

Glorify the Lord with me;

Let us together praise his name.

I sought the Lord and he answered me.

He saved me from all my fears.

All: Come. Let us follow the Lord.

Look to the Lord and you will have joy.

You will never be ashamed.

Taste and see how good the Lord is.

Happy is the person who trusts in him!

All: Come. Let us follow the Lord

A Reading from the Gospel according to John.

Jesus said, "My children, I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so should you love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. "

The Word of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer of the Faithful

The Response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our Pope, our Bishops, and all of our priests, that they will show us how to love and follow you, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For peace in the world and in our country, that we might learn to live as members of one family, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all of us: teachers, parents, and children, that we will come to love each other as you love us, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those in our families who are sick, that they may get well so they can continue to serve you, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those in our families who have died, that they may be happy with you in your kingdom of heaven, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

(Please stand for the Gathering Song)

Gathering Song: He is Good (or similar)

Greeting: Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus, our Savior and our friend.

All: Amen

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come to you today because we are sorry for the times we have not loved others the way you want us to. We are sorry for the times we have lied or disobeyed our parents. We are sorry for the times we have fought with our brothers and sisters and friends. We know that you love us. We thank you for bringing us here today to forgive us in the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior.

All: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Reader: A Reading from a Letter of St. Paul:

Brothers and Sisters;
Do as God does.
After all, you are His dear children now.
Be good and honest and truthful,
and always try to please Him.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Response: Jesus Has a Little Lamb (or similar)

(Please stand for the Gospel)

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew:

Now, someone approached him and said, Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "If you wish to enter eternal life, keep the commandments. "Which ones?" he asked. And Jesus replied:

You shall not kill. You shall not steal.
You shall not lie.
Honor your father and your Mother.
Love your neighbor as yourself.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

(Please be seated)

Homily

(All kneel)

Litany of Mercy

Jesus, You are the Father's Word of Love.

Lord, have mercy

All: Lord, have mercy

Jesus, You send us the Spirit. He helps us to know when we have done something wrong.

Christ, have mercy

All: Christ, have mercy.

Jesus, You come to forgive and heal us. You share the Father's love with us.

Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray together:

**Father,
I love You.
Please forgive me
because I have sinned.
I am very sorry.
Help me always to love You
Help me to not sin again. Amen.**

Now, let us stand and pray together the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father

Closing Hymn: Amigos de Christo (or similar)

(The children will now go to confession individually. They may leave with their parents when they are finished. If the child is not ready to make his first confession, please bring him into the confessional so that he can meet the priest and receive his blessing.)