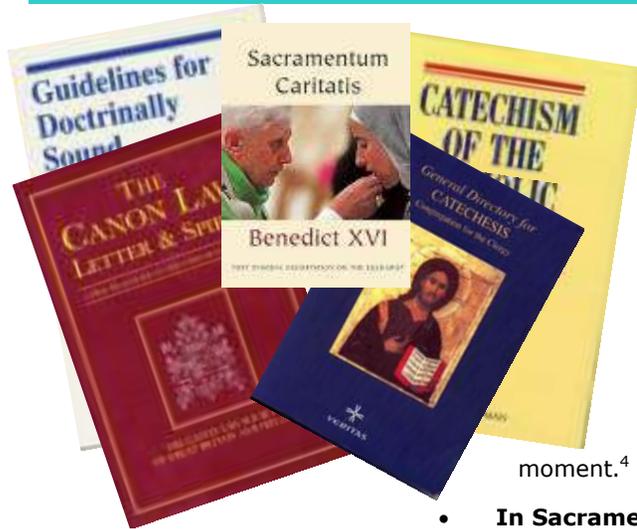


## First Communion/First Reconciliation – Which programme should we choose?

1



*The Church gives us guidelines about what to include in our programmes. She tells us:*

- **The time for first communion** is when the child reaches the age of reason, which is presumed to occur on completion of the seventh year. Children should make their first sacramental confession prior to receiving their first communion.<sup>1</sup>
- **Children should have sufficient knowledge and be carefully prepared.** It is the responsibility of the parents and the parish priest to prepare children who have reached the age of reason; the children should reach an understanding according to their capacity and they should be able to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.<sup>2</sup> The children have a right to be taught by catechists who truly reflect the mind of the Church and, in this regard, their parents and catechists have a right to formation in contemporary theology.<sup>3</sup>
- **Families should be part of the process of initiation.** Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and first communion) are key moments not only for the individual receiving them but also for the entire family, which should be supported in its educational role by the various elements of the ecclesial community; he says that parish pastoral programmes should make the most of this highly significant moment.<sup>4</sup> This is why parishes should offer and parents should participate in parish pre-sacramental catechesis.
- **In Sacramentum Caritatis,** Pope Benedict XVI also recommended that, in their preparation for First Holy Communion, children be taught the meaning and the beauty of spending time with Jesus, and helped to cultivate a sense of awe before his presence in the Eucharist.<sup>5</sup>
- **The Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Materials** tells us that we must emphasise God's saving and transforming presence in the sacraments. In the Eucharist, Christ is present not only in the person of the priest, but in the assembly and in the Word and, uniquely, in the eucharistic species of bread and wine that becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>6</sup> We are also told that the catechesis for the sacrament of reconciliation should emphasise God's mercy and loving forgiveness and that faith, a gift of God, is a call to conversion from sin.<sup>7</sup>
- **The Instruction on Eucharistic Worship,** issued after Vatican II to implement the Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, indicates how teaching children about the Eucharist and preparing them for First Communion might help them enter into and experience the eucharistic mystery. They tell us that we should emphasise instruction on the Mass, which, while being suited to the age and abilities of the children, should aim to convey the meaning of the Mass through the principal rites and prayers.<sup>8</sup> We are told that, because children around the age of 7 tend to think concretely, they grasp concepts like 'unity' and 'belonging' from experiences, such as sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking and celebrating. Such experiences, coupled with explanations of the Eucharist adapted to their intellectual capacity and with further efforts to familiarise them with the main events of Jesus' life, help them to participate more meaningfully in the action of the mass and to receive Christ's body and blood in communion in an informed and reverent way.<sup>9</sup>
- **There must be 'content' in the catechesis.** The General Directory for Catechesis tells us that we find content in Scripture, through witness (or apostolic work), in our Creed (our profession of faith, through our lived moral values and in our liturgies and in our prayer.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is structured around these same fundamental dimensions (or pillars) of the Christian life.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Canon ¶97 §2, Canon ¶914

<sup>2</sup> Canon Law ¶913 §1

<sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, ¶2037, General Directory for Catechesis, ¶234, Canon Law ¶213

<sup>4</sup> Sacramentum Caritatis: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission (February 22, 2007), ¶19.

<sup>5</sup> Sacramentum Caritatis ¶67

<sup>6</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium ¶7; Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Materials, ¶39

<sup>7</sup> National Catechetical Directory (NCD), ¶125

<sup>8</sup> Instruction on Eucharistic Worship, ¶14

<sup>9</sup> National Catechetical Directory (NCD), ¶121

<sup>10</sup> *General Directory of Catechesis*, Congregation for the Clergy, Catholic Truth Soc., Lon.1997, ¶¶94-95,117-119. See also the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, ¶¶75.1-75.4.

<sup>11</sup> *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1994 as quoted in ¶122 of the *General Directory of Catechesis*.

**We Believe & Celebrate First Communion**, Sadlier Sacramental Programme, New York, 2006  
(6 sessions, 0 celebrations)

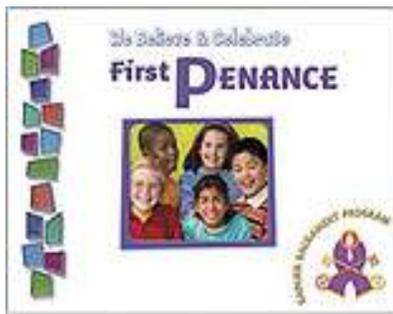


This is a hands-on resource for First Communion preparation containing everything the catechist needs for every session. It provides immediate preparation for children's first reception of the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. Through Scripture and through age-appropriate presentation of Church teaching and the element of the celebration of the Eucharist, children are led to "participate actively and consciously in the Mass" (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 36A3a). The programme prepares children in the context of their families and their parish community and leads to the celebration of the sacrament. Each session is linked to a part of the Mass – although the programme does not include any parish Mass celebrations. It provides an "experience of *mystagogia* following the celebration" (*NDC 358*) to enable children to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament as they continue to grow in discipleship to Jesus. The programme interweaves the four dimensions of Christian life very well: faith professed, celebrated, lived in Christ and deepened in prayer. Janine Müller-Green writes in *The Sower*: "Generally the resource offers good, albeit brief, coverage of key aspects of the Mystery of the Eucharist (Real Presence, Sacrifice, 'Meal' and Memorial). It is a comprehensive and reliable resource." The programme involves parents and parish and should be an invaluable tool for the

new catechist in need of practical help and confidence. See the chart following for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of three books: the student text (\$14.37), the Parish Director's Guide (\$20.58) and a First Communion Guide (\$20.58) and can only be purchased through Sadlier in New York (Bill Dinger Jr. [bdingerjr@sadlier.com])

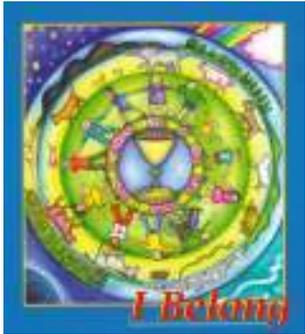
**We Believe & Celebrate First Penance**, Sadlier Sacramental Programme, New York, 2006  
(6 sessions, 0 celebrations)



This is a hands-on resource for First Reconciliation preparation containing everything the catechist needs for every session. It provides immediate preparation for children's first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Students transform their books into personalized keepsakes with photos and drawings. *We Gather* and *We Share God's Word* sections give children the opportunity to express their faith through prayer and other activities, and foster an understanding of Scripture. The *We Believe and Celebrate* section focuses on the symbols, rituals and prayers for the sacrament. The *We Respond* section involves children and their families in sharing faith. Program components include Student Book, Catechist/Family Guide with flexible options for home use, Director Guide for sacramental catechesis involving the whole parish. The programme involves parents and parish and should be an invaluable tool for the new catechist in need of practical help and confidence. See the chart following for contents of the programme. See the chart following for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of three books: the student text (\$14.37), the Parish Director's Guide (\$20.58) and a First Communion Guide (\$20.58) and can only be purchased through Sadlier in New York (Bill Dinger Jr. [bdingerjr@sadlier.com])

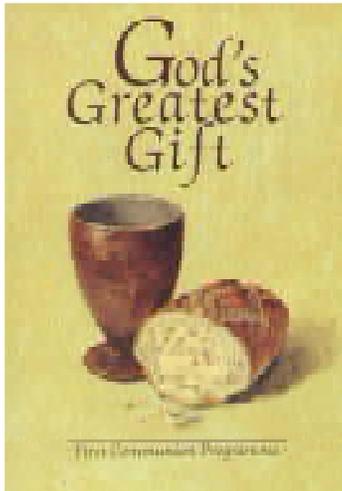
***I Belong***, Aileen Urquhart, Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire, 1998  
(11 sessions (2 of which prepare the children for the Sacrament of Reconciliation) and 7 parents meetings)



This is an up-to-date First Holy Communion Programme with full and clear resource links to the latest catechetical approaches. The Programme contains lively, colourful material in which illustrations and examples are used to reflect the world where today's children live and experience faith. Each session includes an Old Testament and a New Testament reading and a link to the Mass and encourages the children to make the connection between what they pray at Mass and how they live their lives. Although they take the children through the Mass methodically, the programme does not include any parish Mass celebrations. The catechist's book offers a step-by-step guide to the full programme carrying clear full-colour links to every page of the children's book. There are plenty of ideas and original suggestions. There is a friendly, but comprehensive, full-colour guide for the parents so that they can take a full part in their child's First Holy Communion preparation, which will help them keep in touch with the thinking and planning behind each stage. There is also a separate pull-out for grandparents. There is also material for those with learning and communication difficulties (including Makaton prayers). See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of three books: the candidate's book (£6.50), the parent's book (£6.50) and the Leader's Guide (£13.95).

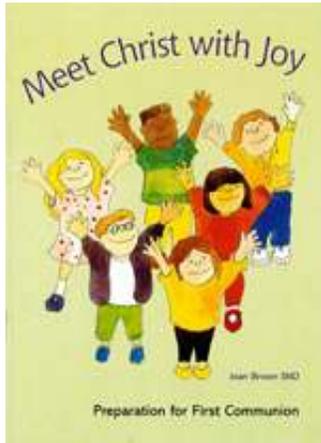
***God's Greatest Gift – Preparing for First Communion***, Bernadette Wilson, ViewPoint Resources Direct, London, 1995  
(10 sessions and 10 celebrations; the programme includes preparation for First Reconciliation)



*God's Greatest Gift* is a fun, hands-on, highly sensory process of preparing for First Communion. It is sensitive to the attention span, energy levels and varied interests of young, enquiring minds. It is designed to be an enjoyable and exciting experience for your children, one that will build a firm understanding of Jesus' immeasurable love for them, one that will set them on a course in life marked by a true commitment to Gospel values. The programme utilises and focuses the special gifts and talents of family members in initiating their child or brother or sister into the sacrament. You will find that not only is the child preparing for First Communion awakened to the tremendous gift of Jesus in the Eucharist, but also the family will experience a renewed understanding and commitment, seeing Jesus once more themselves through the unclouded eyes of children. The programme is designed to truly empower and bring out the best in your leaders, even if they're first-time volunteers. They will be able to guide the children easily, yet solidly, to a true understanding of the Eucharist through story, song, activity and discussion. It will be fun for them, too! As with most First Communion programmes, it leads the children through the various parts of the Mass; it does not do this in the order of the Mass, however, which might confuse some people. See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of six books: There are a number of different editions of the programme: the Standard Edition (£9.40), the Silver Edition (£7.80), and the Bronze Edition (£5.80). In addition, there is a Catechist's Guide (£11.90) and a Parent Guide (£4.60); and there is an Art Resource Book (£25.00). You can also purchase the songs that are included in the programme: GGG Songs – Share the Light Music Book (£9.95), cassette (£7.99) and CD + CD Rom (£16.45).

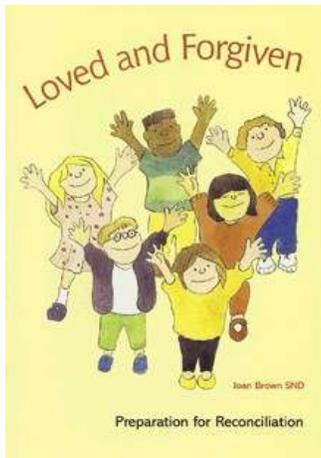
**Meet Christ with Joy**, Joan Brown, Kevin Mayhew, Stowmarket, 1991



*Meet Christ with Joy* is primarily a book for parents and children to enjoy as they journey together in faith towards Eucharist. Whether it is part of a parish- or school-based preparation programme, it forms a complete and personal record of this special time. The meaning of the many things we do at Mass – the actions, the prayers, the words we use – are not meaningful for children unless we can relate them to their lived experience. This is what *Meet Christ with Joy* attempts to do. It leads the child through awareness of self and identity within a human family to an understanding of membership in God's family, the Church. Through activities, prayers, Scripture stories and celebrations, the children are prepared for the joy and wonder of meeting Christ in the Eucharist. A companion volume enables the parents and catechists to get the best of the preparation time with the children offering helpful suggestions for working in the children's books and provides explanatory notes linked to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of two books: the children's book (£6.99) and the Parents' and Catechists' Companion (£10.99)

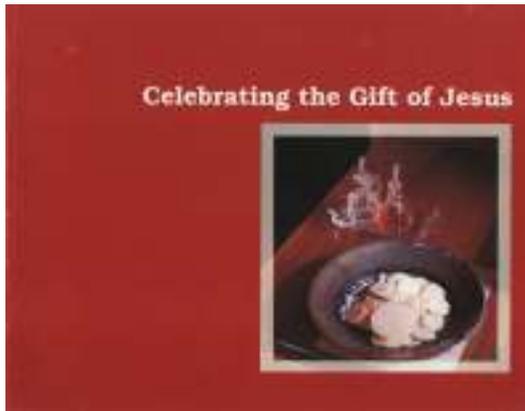
**Loved and Forgiven**, Joan Brown, Kevin Mayhew, Stowmarket, 1991



*Loved and Forgiven* is primarily a book for parents and children to enjoy as they journey together in faith towards the child's First Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Whether it is part of a parish- or school-based preparation programme, it forms a complete and personal record of this special time. The five themes of the book reflect the stages of the Rite of celebration of the sacrament. When a person comes seeking forgiveness, the priest welcomes the person with the same kind and loving manner as Jesus always greeted those who came to him. The penitent reflects upon and shares who they are with the priest and who God has called them to be in Baptism. In the light of God's word, they remember how they are loved and how they have failed to respond to love and they seek God's loving forgiveness. A companion volume enables the parents and catechists to get the best of the preparation time with the children offering helpful suggestions for working in the children's books and provides explanatory notes linked to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme comprises of two books: the children's book (£6.99) and the Parents' and Catechists' Companion (£10.99)

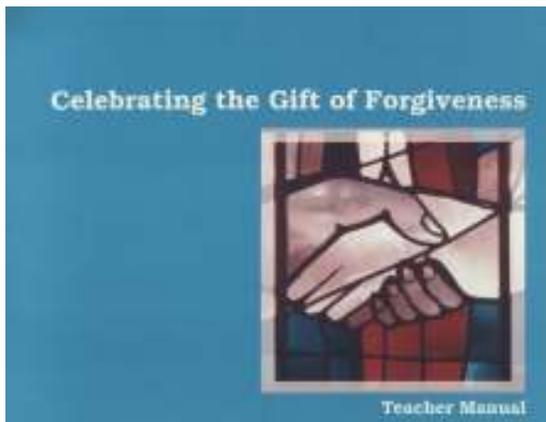
***Celebrating the Gift of Jesus***, Sr. Mary Fearon and Sandra Hirstein, Brown-Roa, Dubuque, Iowa, 1993  
(7 sessions + 3 celebrations)



The programme allows opportunities for adults to reflect on particular aspects of the sacrament. These sessions can be used as adult education both for parents and for catechists – or they can be used as catechist preparation for teaching the children's lesson. The children's book offers seven sessions; each of them involves experiential learning, liturgical instruction, biblical proclamation and prayer response. The last session provides a general review and an immediate preparation for the reception of the sacrament. At the beginning of every lesson in the child's text, is a page to help the parent understand the lesson's focus and content. It provides the parents with material for personal reflection on some aspect of the sacrament. At the end of each lesson there is a family follow-up page that provides relevant questions to discuss with the child, some additional suggestions for incorporating the lesson's theme into the life of the family and a prayer experience. There are opportunities for communal prayer which should help both the adults and the children better understand certain aspects of the sacramental rite and give them an opportunity to express their understanding in a faith-filled response. See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme consists of a book for the child, one for the teacher and one for the parents.

***Celebrating the Gift of Forgiveness***, Sr. Mary Fearon and Sandra Hirstein, Brown-Roa, Dubuque, Iowa, 1993  
(7 sessions)



The programme allows opportunities for adults to reflect on particular aspects of the sacrament. These sessions can be used as adult education both for parents and for catechists – or they can be used as catechist preparation for teaching the children's lesson. The children's book offers seven sessions; each of them involves experiential learning, liturgical instruction, biblical proclamation and prayer response. The last session provides a general review and an immediate preparation for the reception of the sacrament. At the beginning of every lesson in the child's text, is a page to help the parent understand the lesson's focus and content. It provides the parents with material for personal reflection on some aspect of the sacrament. At the end of each lesson there is a family follow-up page that provides relevant questions to discuss with the child, some additional suggestions for incorporating the lesson's theme into the life of the family and a prayer experience. There are opportunities for communal prayer which should help both the adults and the children better understand certain aspects of the sacramental rite and give them an opportunity to express their understanding in a faith-filled response. See the following chart for contents of the programme.

The programme consists of a book for the child, one for the teacher and one for the parents.

**Other resources:**



**Journey Together Towards: First Holy Communion:** Paddy Rylands, Kevin Mayhew, Stowmarket, 2000 (£11.99 each)

These books are designed for catechists and priests working with parents whose children are preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Their aim is to produce and support parents who are interested, involved and committed. Structured meeting plans provide parents with the skills to fully support their children at these important times in their lives.

Paddy Rylands leaves nothing to chance - from planning the venue to preparing the leadership team and how to get the most out of each specific topic. Sessions can either be held monthly or weekly in a block before the children's sessions. All come with a general outline, team preparation, family sheet, session notes and handout.

- forms part of the parish's overall provision of adult catechesis
- supports parents both before and after preparation for these Sacraments
- user-friendly format and photocopiable sheets



**Your Child's First Communion and Your Child's First Confession:** Rosemary Gallagher, Redemptorist Publications, £3.50

These two books – in up-to-the-minute format are designed to help the priest or catechist work with children by inviting parents to share in and more easily appreciate their child's sacramental preparation. They are complementary to any other sacramental preparation the children are doing to prepare for their First Holy Communion or their First Reconciliation.



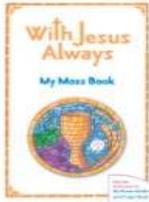
**Your Child's First Communion & Your Child's First Penance:** Carol Luebering, Handing on the Faith Series, St. Anthony's Press, OH 2000 £2.50

Parents are expected to take an active role in preparing their children for First Communion; but often parents are confronted with concepts which seem quite different from their own understanding of Eucharist, their own memories of First Communion day, and their own hopes about what this day will mean to their child. This book will help.

"I'm sorry." Your child first heard those words from you very early in life. You spoke them in a moment of carelessness or impatience, and your little one soon learned to echo them. Soon your child will say I'm sorry to God and to the whole Church, represented by its priest, in the Sacrament of Penance. Again, this book will help parents in their understanding and help them to help their child.

## First Communion/First Reconciliation – Which programme should we choose?

7



**With Jesus Always – My Mass Book:** Sadlier, New York, 2006

This book aims to help children learn to pray and participate fully in the Mass and the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in a single, unique "flip" book

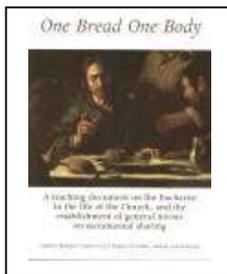
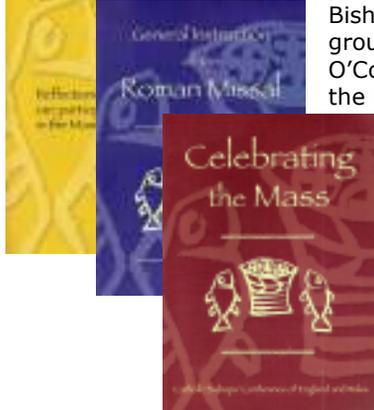
Available only through Sadlier in New York (Bill Dinger Jr. [bdingerjr@sadlier.com])



**With Hearts and Minds** is a resource for small groups, intended to assist participants to a deeper appreciation of the nature and role of the Liturgy in the life of the Christian community; to participate more deeply in the Liturgy. It presents in a more accessible form the teaching about parish celebration of the liturgy that is in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and in *Celebrating the Mass*, a document of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Through reflection on the scriptures, the teaching of the Church and on their own experience group members will be helped to develop both their understanding of the Mass and a liturgical spirituality. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor has written: 'With Hearts and Minds provides an opportunity to consider how we pray the Mass, and how what we experience in the Mass might be carried into our lives, helping us to become a still more authentically Eucharistic people.'

*With Hearts and Minds* is available from the Catholic Truth Society (CTS, [www.cts-online.org.uk](http://www.cts-online.org.uk)): participant's book £7.95; leaders book £14.95

**The General Instruction to the Roman Missal** and **Celebrating the Mass** are also available from CTS at £9.95 and £7.95 respectively. *GIRM* was prepared by the Holy See; *CTM* is a pastoral guide to the celebration of Mass prepared by the Bishops of England and Wales and addressing the particular situation and needs of the Church in their dioceses. It is intended to assist people in their understanding of the Liturgy of the Mass, and to be a companion to *GIRM*.



**One Bread One Body**, Bishops' Conferences of England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland

One Bread One Body is a teaching document from the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, on the Eucharist in the life of the Church. The document is commended to Catholics as a source of study and reflection. It is also offered to other Christians with the hope that it will help to clarify what the Catholic Church believes about the Eucharist

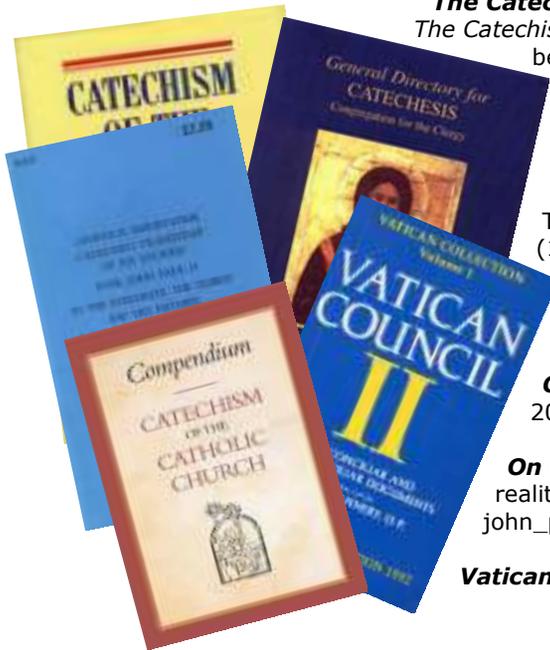
*One Bread One Body* is available from the Catholic Truth Society (CTS, [www.cts-online.org.uk](http://www.cts-online.org.uk)) for £4.95.



**Sharing in His Life**, the Diocese of Westminster's daily meditation and group reflection booklet for Autumn 2007. Sharing in His Life takes as its theme the celebration of the Mass and worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass. Over the course of sessions, *Sharing in His Life* will help our understanding of the gift and Mystery we celebrate Sunday by Sunday. Available on the diocesan website:

<http://www.rcdow.org.uk/evangelisation/downloads/mainbooklet.pdf>

**Essential resources for catechists in the parish**



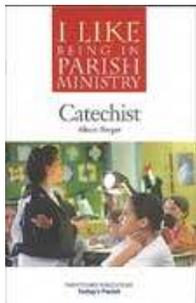
**The Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Geoffrey Chapman, London, March 2000, London £10.99  
The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the first new edition of the catechism in 400 years. It is the authoritative summary of Catholic belief regarding the Church creeds, sacraments, commandments and prayers. The book is exceptionally well organised, with line-by-line explanations of every conceivable aspect of orthodox Catholic belief. Extensive cross-referencing, indexing and footnotes and "In Brief" summaries of each section further ease the project of finding the precise answers to any questions a reader might have.

**Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Catholic Truth Society, London, £6.95  
The new essential guide to the Catholic faith is a faithful and sure official synthesis of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) Prepared by a commission presided over by the then Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI,

**General Directory for Catechesis**, The Congregation for the Clergy, Catholic Truth Society,  
The General Directory for Catechesis provides religious educators, teachers, and catechists with a single point of reference for all aspects of catechetical instruction. Also available in easy-to-read language: **The General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English: A Summary and Commentary (Paperback)** by Bill Huebsch, Twenty-third Publications, 2001, £7.99.

**On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)** Pope John Paul II s timeless apostolic exhortation reflects on the realities and joys of bringing the mystery of Christ to all the world. (available on line: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae_en.html))

**Vatican II documents:** Sixteen documents produced by the Second Vatican Council (available on line: <http://www.vatican.va>).



**I like being in Parish Ministry – Catechist**, Alison Berger, New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2006

*This is an ideal introduction to being a catechist for both those beginning their ministry and ministry veterans affirming their calls to service.*  
Alison Berger invites catechists to probe the heart of their vocation: to help those they minister with to know, celebrate, live, and contemplate the mystery of Christ and so grow in communion with him. With stories, reflections questions, and concrete suggestions, she guides readers in exploring the spiritual and practical dimensions of catechizing as Jesus did. Ideal for both those beginning their ministry and ministry veterans affirming their calls to service

Cost: \$4.95

<b><i>We Believe &amp; Celebrate First Communion</i></b>	<b><i>I Belong</i></b>	<b><i>God's Greatest Gift</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>We belong to the Church</b> – aims at helping the children understand that, in Baptism, we become children of God and members of the Church, receiving the gift of grace, God's life within us.</li> <li>2. <b>We Gather and Give Thanks</b> – aims at helping the children realise that the Mass is the celebration of the Eucharist. Celebration focus: Introductory Rites.</li> <li>3. <b>We Celebrate the Liturgy of the Word</b> – aims at 10 helping the children understand that, during the Liturgy of the Word, we listen to the word of God being proclaimed, we say what we believe in and we pray for the Church and the world.</li> <li>4. <b>We Celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist</b> – aims at helping the children understand that by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the words and actions of the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The Celebration focus is the preparation of the gifts and the Eucharistic Prayer.</li> <li>5. <b>We Receive the Body and Blood of Christ</b> – aims at helping the children understand that, when we receive Holy Communion, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, that Jesus is truly present in the consecrated Bread and the consecrated Wine. The Celebration focus is on the Communion Rite.</li> <li>6. <b>We Love and Serve the Lord</b> – aims at helping the children understand that, receiving Jesus in Holy Communion helps us to love God and others. It helps us to become stronger disciples of Jesus. It helps us to join our parish community in serving God and others. The Celebration focus is the Concluding Rites.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>In the Name of the Father</b> – aims to help the children get a sense of their belonging to the Church by virtue of their baptism; it focuses on the Introductory Rite of the Mass.</li> <li>2. <b>Lord have Mercy</b> – In this session, the children focus on the Penitential Rite of the Mass, to bring them to a better understanding of the mercy of God and how we are called to be merciful.</li> <li>3. <b>Celebrating our Rescue</b> ) relate to preparation for reconciliation</li> <li>4. <b>God Helps me to get it right</b> ) ciliation To begin with the children are helped to think of how we are always being rescued by God, that reconciliation is always taking place in every-day life and that the sacrament is an opportunity to praise God for his understanding, help and forgiveness in the past. The second session thinks about how God helps them 'get it right' and how the sacrament can give us help for the future.</li> <li>5. <b>Glory to God in the Highest</b> – In this session, the children will be thinking about how Jesus gave glory to his father. It focuses on the Gloria.</li> <li>6. <b>This is the Word of the Lord</b> – In this session, the children will be thinking about listening to the Word of God; it focuses on the Liturgy of the Word.</li> <li>7. <b>Bread to Offer</b> – In this session, the children will be thinking about the Preparation of the Gifts and the Offertory.</li> <li>8. <b>Fruit of the Vine</b> – In this session the children will be thinking how wine symbolises celebration and sorrow – introducing them to the Liturgy of the Eucharist.</li> <li>9. <b>Do this in Memory of Me</b> – In this session, the children focus on the words of consecration and on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.</li> <li>10. <b>Body of Christ</b> – This session focuses on the words the "body of Christ" and "blood of Christ!"</li> <li>11. <b>To Love and to Serve</b> – This session takes place after the children have received their first communion; it allows time for a party</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The Gift of Creation</b> – helps the child see that in the Eucharist we thank God for all creation – especially the gift of Jesus. It focuses on the Eucharistic Prayer, our prayer of praise and thanksgiving.</li> <li>2. <b>A Very Special Gift</b> –helps the child to understand that in the Eucharist we thank God for our gifts by promising to share ourselves with others like Jesus did. It helps the children understand the Presentation of the Gifts at Mass.</li> <li>3. <b>The Gift of Baptism</b> – helps the child see that baptism is the beginning of life in the Eucharistic community; the activity is a mock baptism and it focuses on the Creed – invite-ing the families to renew their baptismal promises at the celebration Mass.</li> <li>4. <b>The Gift of God's Word</b> – helps the child to see that when we listen to the Word in Mass, God is present in a special way. This session focuses on the Liturgy of the Word.</li> <li>5. <b>The Gift of Friendship</b> – helps the child see that the Eucharist is a gathering of the friends of Jesus and focuses on our gathering at the beginning of Mass as part of the Christian community/family.</li> <li>6. <b>The Gift of Forgiveness</b> – helps the child to realise how many times in the Eucharist we say sorry for the wrongs we have done, ask forgiveness of God and our neighbour. (Some people use this session to prepare the children to celebrate their First Reconciliation; some supplement it and some use another programme to prepare the children.)</li> <li>7. <b>The Gift of Peace</b> – reminds the child that in our Eucharist we share the <i>sign of peace</i> with the people around us and, as we offer the sign of peace to one another, we pray for peace in our hearts and around the world.</li> <li>8. <b>The Gift of Joy</b> – helps the child to thank God for the gift of joy, to be aware of where Jesus is with us now – as we listen to his words and when we share the Eucharist. It focuses on how, when we say "Amen" we are saying "Yes, Jesus, I believe you are here."</li> <li>9. <b>The Greatest Gift</b> – helps the child to understand that it was during a meal that Jesus promised to be with us always and that in our Eucharist we recall that meal.</li> <li>10. <b>Our Gift to God</b> – We are missioned.</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>We Believe &amp; Celebrate First Penance</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>We are followers of Jesus</b> – aims to help the children understand that God gave us the commandments because he loves us.</li> <li>2. <b>We Remember God's Love and Forgiveness</b> – aims at helping the children realise that Jesus told stories to teach people about God's love and how he wants us to stay close to him.</li> <li>3. <b>We Prepare to Receive God's Forgiveness</b> – aims to help the children understand what the sacrament is about and all the different names the sacrament is called.</li> <li>4. <b>We Prepare to Celebrate Penance</b> – prepares the children to celebrate the sacrament – introducing them to an examination of conscience and teaching them the Act of Contrition.</li> <li>5. <b>We Celebrate Penance with the Church</b> – explains what the children will do when they celebrate the sacrament, what absolution means and how they should pray afterwards.</li> <li>6. <b>We are Peacemakers</b> – aims to help the children understand that we are peacemakers. The priest tells us that we should "go in peace" at the end of the celebration of the sacrament. It also explains the different ways that we can celebrate the sacrament – either individually or in the community.</li> </ol>		

<p><b>Celebrating the Gift of Jesus</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>We belong to God’s Family (Belonging)</b> – The Eucharist is a special sign of belonging to the Christian family. [Introductory Rite of the Mass]</li> <li><b>We listen to God’s Word (Listening)</b>–At the Eucharist, Jesus is present in the Liturgy of the Word. [Liturgy of the Word]</li> <li><b>Gifts of Bread and Wine (Giving)</b> – During Mass, we bring gifts of bread and wine. [Preparation of the Gifts]</li> <li><b>Jesus shares Himself (Sharing)</b> – The priest takes our gifts of bread and wine, blesses them and offers them to God. God changes them into Jesus’ sacramental body and blood. [Eucharistic Prayer]</li> <li><b>We receive Jesus (Receiving)</b> –Before receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, we express our unity in Christ.[Communion Rite The Lord’s Prayer and Sign of Peace]</li> <li><b>We thank God for Jesus (Thanking)</b> – We thank Jesus for giving Himself to us under the sign of bread and wine. [Holy Communion]</li> <li><b>We celebrate Eucharist (Celebrating)</b> – The Eucharist is the Catholic Christian community’s most important prayer of thanks and praise. [Review of Sacrament of Eucharist]</li> </ol>	<p><b>Meet Christ with Joy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Community</b> – aims to gather and welcome the children; they look at baptism and how they belong to the family of the Church, and how we gather together.</li> <li><b>Prayer</b> – aims to help the children learn how we pray at Mass and how we pray in our hearts;</li> <li><b>Good News</b> – aims to help the children realise we have a story to share; it looks at the Liturgy of the Word.</li> <li><b>Celebration</b> – aims to help the children understand how the Mass is a celebration; it looks at the Pass-over and how the bread and wine are blessed at Mass.</li> <li><b>Remembering</b> – aims to help the children understand the special meal that the Mass is and how we remember the Last Supper at Mass.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Celebrating the Gift of Forgiveness</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>God’s Love Welcomes Us</b> – aims to help the children become more aware of how much God loves his children and how Jesus and the Church show God’s love.</li> <li><b>God’s Forgiveness Makes us One</b> – helps the children understand that through baptism, they belong to God’s family in the Church and they will always be a part of that family – even when they fail</li> <li><b>God’s Word Guides Us</b> – aims to help the children become better attuned to listening to God’s Word</li> <li><b>We Follow God’s Word</b> – helps the children become aware that when Christians love God and one another, they are following Jesus</li> <li><b>We Show we are Sorry</b> – aims to help the children become more aware that God is a loving, forgiving father</li> <li><b>We Praise and Thank God</b> – aims to encourage the children to thank God for the gift of forgiveness and peace that God offers in the sacrament of reconciliation.</li> <li><b>We Celebrate Reconciliation</b> – aims to help the child to review and prepare for the sacrament of reconciliation.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Loved and Forgiven</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Welcome</b> – aims at helping the children see how we are welcomed when we come to Church on Sunday; it renews their baptismal promises</li> <li><b>Myself</b> – aims at helping the children think about themselves and how they relate to their family and friends; the kinds of things they do together.</li> <li><b>Listening</b> – aims at helping the children understand the importance of listening to Scripture – how God speaks to us through Scripture</li> <li><b>Remember</b> – aims to help the children remember happy times and times when they have refused to listen to God calling them to be happy – times when they have refused to love-to-share-to-care and talks about the sacrament of reconciliation as a time of celebration of remembering.</li> <li><b>Home Rejoicing</b> – prepares the children to celebrate the sacrament.</li> </ol>