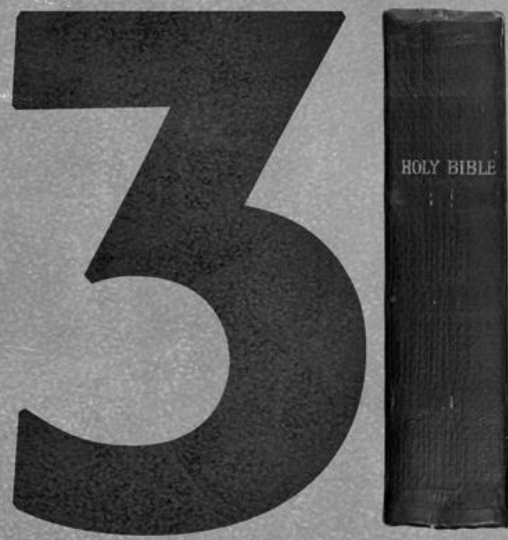


“An exciting and superbly practical field guide
for those who love the Catholic faith.”

Lisa Mladinich

Author of *Be an Amazing Catechist*



31 DAYS to
Becoming a
BETTER
RELIGIOUS
EDUCATOR

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The Spiritual Formation of Catechists

Webinar Handouts

September 17, 2013



Recalling My Calling: The Big Why List (Day 1)

“Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.”

— Frederick Buechner

1. List all of the needs of the Church or of the students you teach below.
2. If I had to choose just **one** lesson about God that my students needed to hear the most, what would it be?
3. What is **one** belief my students struggle with the most?
4. What is **one** spiritual practice my students could benefit from the most?
5. If I could help my students make **one** change in their life, what would it be?
6. What aspect of the faith are kids missing the most in their lives?
7. What are the biggest problems adult Catholics experience in the Church?

****Star or circle the answers that either get you excited or make you angry. If there is only one answer that gets you really excited, then consider this the focal point of your call to teach.**

Recognize My Relationship with Christ (Day 2)

1. How did you meet Jesus Christ? (Who introduced you to him? What are your earliest memories of him?)
2. How has your relationship grown over the years? (How did you come to know him more deeply?)
3. What is your relationship with Christ like today? (How often do you spend time with him in prayer? When and how do you pray? When do you think about Christ the most?)

A Timeline of Your Relationship with Christ (Turn the paper sideways)



Making Prayer a Habit (Day 7)

The prayer experience I want to add:

My current routine:

My new routine with the prayer habit:

The obstacles I will face in making this prayer a habit:

I will remind myself to pray by:

I will tell the following people to keep me accountable to my prayer commitment:

A Daily Examen (Day 29)

Using this five-step process taken from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, review your day and allow God to show you where he was working in your life today.

Day 29

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Going Deeper

A popular prayer from St. Ignatius of Loyola can help you to review your day. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola suggested that the Prayer of Examen be practiced twice daily in order to reflect and give thanks. St. Ignatius suggested a process in which we do the following:

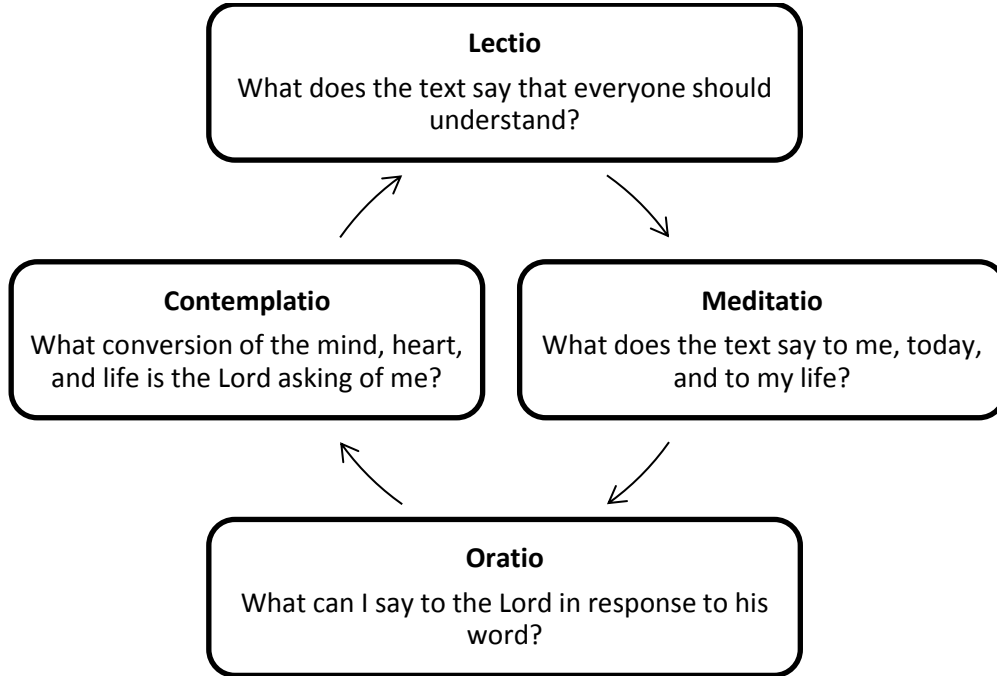
1. Give thanks
2. Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance
3. Review the day
4. Ask for grace and forgiveness
5. Repent

Apply these five steps to help you review your day.

(Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator*, page 153)

Reading the Bible: Practicing *Lectio Divina* (Day 4)

Directions: Select a passage from the Bible and read it a few times. Answer the questions in each box below. Write the responses on this handout or in a journal.



Lectio: _____

Meditatio: _____

Oratio: _____

Contemplatio: _____

Modeling Mary, the First Disciple-Teacher

Follow the directions in the two “Going Deeper” meditations on Mary, Mother of God, and first disciple-teacher of Jesus Christ.

Going Deeper

As his Mother, Mary was the first teacher in Jesus’ life. She modeled the way he should live his life. The best clue as to the type of teacher Mary would have been to her Son is her deeply humble disposition to God’s will in the Magnificat (Lk 1:46–55). Pray the words of the Magnificat. Reflect on some ways you can apply what she said to your own life.

(Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator*, page 16)

Going Deeper

The Rosary is a powerful form of prayer that contains various components. We pray a number of different prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, the Apostles’ Creed, etc.), and we meditate upon the mysteries of the lives of Christ and Mary. At its core, though, is the simple recitation of the ancient Hail Mary, calling on the Blessed Mother’s intercession on our behalf. Take a few minutes today to pray and reflect on the words of the Hail Mary prayer.

(Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator*, page 123)

Praise God! (Day 11)

Follow the directions in this “Going Deeper” suggestion for your personal prayer time.

Going Deeper

In your personal prayer time, do you spend enough time *praising* God? Praise is the form of prayer that “recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because he is” (CCC, 2639). In your own personal prayer time today, rather than petitioning God for something, simply offer praise. Most of us are not used to offering praise as a form of prayer, but it is powerful. It “embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him” (CCC, 2639). If you need help getting started, consider praying with some Psalms of praise, especially Psalms 95, 96, 145, or 146.

(Dees, *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator*, page 58)

Becoming a Witness (Day 31)

Think of a religious experience in your life that changed you in some way. Read and answer the questions below (pp. 162–63 of *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator*).

Conversion Experience: _____

P: Prior Experience – Why did you need to encounter God?

R: Receive Grace – How did you encounter God?

O: Openness to Grace – How were you able to open yourself up to God?

C: Conversion – What changed in your life as a result of this encounter?

ESS: Witness – How can you share this encounter with others?

My Witness: Telling My Story (Days 24)

Divide your conversion story into three parts: the beginning, middle, and end. For the beginning, explain the circumstances of your life when you needed God the most. In the middle, explain how you encountered God. In the end, explain how that encounter changed you and made a lasting impact on your life. Use this sheet as talking points for your testimony.

Beginning

Middle

End

Check-In: Discipleship Partners

“The Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit.” (Luke 10:1)

Each time you meet with your discipleship partner, share an update about your role as a catechist and evangelizer in each of the following areas:

1. Personal Spiritual Journey with God

2. Evangelism and Catechesis Successes

3. Evangelism and Catechesis Challenges

4. Evangelism and Catechesis Goals & Areas for Growth

Being a Full-time Evangelizer

*Are you willing to share your faith outside the comforts of your classroom and parish? As a **catechist**, you are called to be a **witness**. As a **witness**, you are called to be an **evangelizer**!*

1. With **who** have you developed a personal, trusting relationship in your life outside of the parish (work, neighborhood, children's groups, sports, hobbies)?

2. **Pray** for the opportunity to share your conversion stories. When will you offer this request to God?

3. If the opportunity should arise and you have the opportunity to share your story, what can you **invite** them to experience or do to extend the conversation (i.e. books they could read, events they could attend with you, ministries they could experience, etc.)?