



Partnerships in Sacramental Catechesis

**THE PASTORAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE SACRAMENTAL
CATECHESIS OF CHILDREN**

**A FAMILY-CENTRED, PARISH-BASED
AND SCHOOL-SUPPORTED APPROACH**

ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

Dear Friends in Christ,



The place in which a child first comes to knowledge of Christ is the family, through the teaching and example of family members. Beyond the family, the local parish and Catholic school (if one is available) assist in the ongoing faith formation of the child. One of the key elements in that formation is the preparation for the SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

I am delighted to be able to present to you this document, *Partnerships in Sacramental Catechesis*, which explores the many ways in which parents, parish and school can work together to ensure that our children, once they have been baptised, grow ever more deeply in their knowledge and love of Jesus, of God our Father and Creator, and of the Holy Spirit who inspires, guides and leads us in our journey towards eternal happiness.

This document is intended to be read in conjunction with the booklet *Sacraments of Initiation for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide*, where the theology of the SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION and the policy and guidelines for the Archdiocese are set out.

Whether in the home, the parish or the school, we are all called to holiness, to live our faith with courage and joy, and to proclaim the good news that we are loved beyond measure by God who walks with us throughout our lives.

May God's blessing be upon us all so that our partnership in the sacramental catechesis of our children will bear rich fruit.

One with you in Christ,

+ Philip Wilson.

+ Phillip E. Wilson DD, JCL
Archbishop of Adelaide

September 2014

Dear Educators in Faith,



It is with great pleasure that I present to educators in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Adelaide this pastoral framework for the sacramental catechesis of children. As privileged partners with families and parish faith communities, this framework will be a wonderful and practical resource as we support children and young people to grow in their relationship with Jesus and the Church through the Sacraments of Initiation.

Complementing the religious education and faith formation that schools provide, this framework will strengthen the very important relationship between parish, family and the school in the provision of the particular formation of those children who seek baptism, become confirmed and fully participate in Eucharist.

The sacramental catechesis framework welcomes people into a rich process of formation and offers principles and practical models for parishes and schools to work closely together. In the complex and varied social, cultural and religious situations that children and families in our schools find themselves, the task of providing sacramental catechesis and welcoming families into life in the church community is not as simple as it once was. Our approach to catechesis recognises this and sets out principles, models and resources to assist schools, parishes and families to work together in discerning and implementing practical, healthy and collaborative approaches which suit their local realities.

The framework reflects Catholic Education SA's ongoing commitment to strengthening partnerships between families, parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Adelaide. This flows from our vision to "create an educational environment which matters to students and their families and which resonates culturally and deeply for them. In each learning area, across the whole life of the school, and in partnership with families, each of us discovers in the Spirit, the love of God which is revealed in Jesus Christ, proclaimed by the Church, presented in the Scriptures, celebrated in the Sacraments and lived by all people of good will."¹

I look forward to *Partnerships in Sacramental Catechesis: The Pastoral Framework for the Sacramental Catechesis of Children* being a very useful platform for the life-giving welcome, through the Sacraments of Initiation, of children and their families into an ever deepening relationship with Christ and our loving God.

Paul Sharkey

Dr Paul Sharkey
Director
Catholic Education SA

¹ Catholic Education
South Australia Mission,
Values and Vision
Statement, 2011.

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Preface

Jesus spent his life inviting people back to healing, wholeness, life and love. He physically expressed God's longing and compassion for every human person. He placed himself in uncomfortable and unsanitary situations, sat at rough tables, rubbed shoulders with undesirable people in order to open conversations with them. He opened their eyes to new possibilities and drew them from misery to joy.

Our task is the same. We are the community through whom Jesus touches the world. In preparing children for full initiation into our faith community, the framework and guidelines offered here are focussed on God's love and hunger for persons and their happiness. They are the means through which we open conversations, establish relationships, draw people into the joy of life that we witness by our own lives and community.

People start the journey into the church from many different places. So the following suggested framework is to be applied always with a view to its purpose, with sensitivity to the circumstances people find themselves in, with flexibility and love, with respect and freedom. Our goal is not compliance but holy relationship with God, with ourselves, others and with all of creation.

1

Purpose and background of the document

The purpose of this document is to guide those preparing children for the Sacraments of Initiation with a pastoral framework which complements the theological understanding contained within *Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide (2014)*.

The primary audience is leaders in parishes, schools and diocesan agencies with pastoral responsibility for the provision of catechesis of children for the Sacraments of Initiation within the Adelaide Archdiocese.

This document has been developed by a working party which was established in late 2011 by the Council of Priests in conjunction with the Catholic Education Office to investigate the parish and school relationship, and related practical issues, with respect to the preparation of children and their families in the Sacraments of Initiation. The Working Party, with representation including Council of Priests, Archdiocesan Office, Catholic Education South Australia, Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office (Catholic Education Office), Office for Worship, Diocesan Liturgical Commission, Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities, Parishes and Catholic Schools, investigated various issues as it inquired into the overarching question:

What does authentic and healthy Sacramental Catechesis of children and their families look like?

In this document, Sacramental Catechesis means formation for those preparing to participate in the Initiation Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

2

Introduction and realities

In the Archdiocese of Adelaide, Sacramental Catechesis occurs within the local parish with the focus on a strong partnership between families, school and parish, recognising that in some parishes there is no Catholic school.

Parents are acknowledged as the first and enduring nurturers of faith in their children. The local Catholic community supports parents and families in their role and the parish community welcomes and supports each family as they undertake the sacramental journey within the community. This journey begins with the decision taken by the family to initiate their child into the faith and life of the Christian community through the sacrament of Baptism.

Deep within the human heart is the desire for God and the search for truth, meaning and communion with God. Families are often aware of being drawn by the Spirit to seek Baptism for their children, but some may at the same time, feel tentative or uncertain about proceeding. *This is a graced moment for profound welcome and support for these families.* It is an opportunity, also, to welcome the questions of parents as they seek deeper involvement with their families in the life of the Church.

CURRENT REALITIES

- We live in a complex world, with a range of diverse challenges facing family life and Church life.
- Many adults have a desire to learn more so that they can truly support their children and be supported by the local Catholic community. Some parents express the desire to do what they know in their hearts is the appropriate thing to do, but some may lack the confidence to come forward and to feel accepted for who they are and where they are in their own Christian journey.
- Sometimes parents feel hesitant about expressing their concerns or asking their questions about the faith in general, and the Sacraments of Initiation in particular. For some people, there would be a challenge around Church life and the inquiries into abuse that may raise questions and doubts for them.
- Families are very often time poor and express concern when it comes to making a commitment to Sacraments of Initiation preparation.
- Some children recognise their own readiness and seek celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation with or without parental support.
- Increasingly, older children and teenagers themselves come forward seeking initiation into the Catholic community.
- Across the Archdiocese of Adelaide there is a wide variety of practice when it comes to preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. The time span for Sacramental Catechesis varies from parish to parish. Not every parish has a Catholic school. The availability of people to assist and having other resources to support families can often present a challenge for parish communities.
- In the light of our rapidly changing and fast-paced existence, a sense of appreciating and making a priority of attending Mass on Sunday, the Lord's Day, is a challenge. This is a source of concern for the local Catholic community and for those on parish teams who are responsible for working in partnership with families to prepare children for the Sacraments of Initiation.

What are the current realities in your community?

Reflect on what current realities mean for Sacramental Catechesis in your community.



The Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist - mark the commitment of both the individual and the community to the lifelong process which will "bring them to the full stature of Christ and ... enable them to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world."

(Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide, 2014, para. 26)



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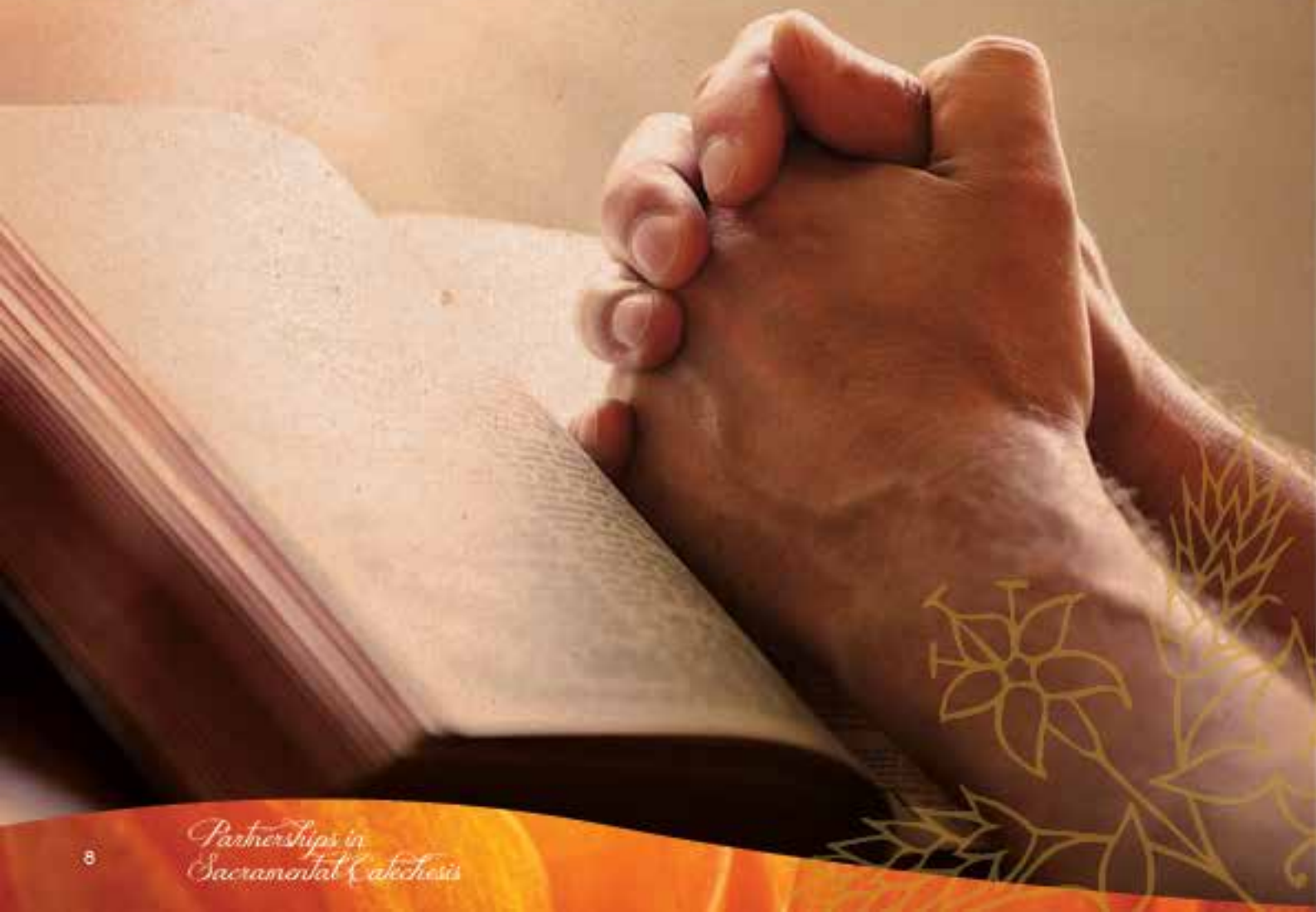
Pastoral principles for the Sacramental Catechesis of Children

Sacramental Catechesis for the Sacraments of Initiation in the Archdiocese of Adelaide is a partnership that is a call to community and is *Family-Centred, Parish-Based* and *School-Supported*. These foundational principles are integral to developing models of Sacramental Catechesis for the local or regional context.

3.1 Family-Centred

Jesus' faith was nurtured by his parents and extended family. They were deeply connected to the traditions and rituals of the Jewish faith. Family life is where children make their first connections to the love of God. Sacramental Catechesis affirms the faith formation which has already begun through the desires of the parents and extended family. It also connects faith with the realities of the life experience of families.

Mindful of the complexities of modern family life, Sacramental Catechesis provides opportunities for families to gather together to share their faith, learn from each other and build a community centred on the Gospel.



3.2 Parish-Based

The local Catholic community welcomes and supports families in the on-going spiritual development of their children. The process of Sacramental Catechesis offers an immersion in the community into which children are being initiated. This initiation and catechesis intentionally includes children attending Catholic, government and other schools.

Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide (2014) describes readiness for the Sacraments of Initiation in terms of the child's presence at liturgical celebrations, familiarity with the prayers and responses for the Mass, and an ability to participate in the liturgy. Familiarity with the Mass and being active members of the Christian community depend on the support, example and commitment of parents and the local Christian community working together.

Therefore, an important part of Sacramental Catechesis is the presence and involvement of families in the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. The invitation is offered for children to participate in their own Children's Liturgy of the Word. This is a time for them to meet Jesus in the Word and enable them to develop a personal relationship with him. This support and invitation occurs with sensitivity to the circumstances people find themselves in, with flexibility and love, with respect and freedom.

The parish works in partnership with families and Catholic schools to enhance Sacramental Catechesis and ongoing faith development.

The Parish Sacrament Team, together with parents, discern the readiness of children to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation. Concerning children of catechetical age seeking Baptism, the Sacrament Team has an important role in discerning the appropriate process with the support of other diocesan guidelines.

3.3 School-Supported

In their contribution to the evangelising mission of the Church, all Catholic schools (i.e. parish schools, colleges and regional schools) provide opportunities for ongoing faith formation for children and their families.

They work in partnership with families and local parishes in the provision of Sacramental Catechesis. Regardless of where children attend school, Sacramental Catechesis of children and the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation primarily take place within the local parish. School support for Sacramental Catechesis needs to incorporate authentic ways of being Parish-Based and Family-Centred.

4

Pastoral elements for the Sacramental Catechesis of Children

In the Archdiocese of Adelaide, Sacramental Catechesis is a partnership which is *Family-Centred, Parish-Based and School-Supported*. This section provides the elements which form the foundation and provision of Sacramental Catechesis.

The elements include:

1. a *Sacrament Team* which enables the partnership between the families, parish and school to occur and develop
2. *practical models* of Sacrament Catechesis which incorporate the pastoral principles of best practice
3. *resources, programs and support* which reflect contemporary pedagogy and support.

4.1 Sacrament Team

PURPOSE OF THE TEAM IS TO

- work from a common understanding and shared vision of *Family-Centred, Parish-Based and School-Supported* approach
- assist and support the parish community to carry out its responsibility to nurture the faith of adults and children
- plan the Sacramental Catechesis, the organisation and implementation of the 'program' as part of the process fitting into the context of the local parish community
- work in partnership combining and sharing resources across the community
- invite and welcome all families and meet them where they are in their faith and life journey.

ROLE OF THE TEAM IS TO

- work together with the parish priest to manage resources
- participate and support training and formation
- invite parents, parishioners, teachers to be group leaders and to provide the necessary training
- inform the parish community of the process for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
- invite families to present their children for the Sacraments of Initiation
- organise the formal process for enrolment
- help the parents discern readiness of their children
- consult and assist families to participate in communal activities and offer growth opportunities for families
- engage in ongoing reflection and evaluation of the needs of the children, families, community and of the catechesis approach adopted to meet these needs
- support the catechists who lead the Sacramental Catechesis.

How will the process be evaluated for each year or group?

What information will be important to gather?

FORMING A SACRAMENT TEAM

The Sacrament Team is formed in the local parish context (and a regional context where relevant). Ideally, it consists of the Parish Priest, the Sacrament Coordinator, Parish Liturgy Coordinator, catechists, parent representatives, APRIM/REC, teacher(s) and parishioners.

- The Parish Priest and Sacrament Coordinator discern the members of the team in consultation with key personnel across the community
- The size of the team depends on local circumstances and a balance of personnel according to the local needs, availability and the size of the parish
- Members are commissioned for an initial period of two years
- The Parish Priest is integral to the process of Sacramental Catechesis and to the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
- Training and formation of the team is essential.

How often will your Sacrament Team meet?

How will communication occur within the Sacrament Team?

THE SACRAMENT COORDINATOR

- Is appointed and has theological formation and skills to provide leadership with all concerned, i.e. families, parish and school personnel. It is also necessary to have appropriate knowledge, skills and approach to meet the learning needs of children on the sacramental journey
- supports and encourages all involved in Sacramental Catechesis
- has adequate time and resources to carry out the role
- liaises with liturgy personnel for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
- liaises between the parish and school
- liaises with, informs and encourages the parish community through notices, welcoming and encouraging children and their families; supports Children's Liturgy of the Word and models the Christian life
- sets up operational procedures for the celebration of Sacraments of Initiation and evaluates with the team
- supports the Parish Priest in the process of Sacramental Catechesis within the parish
- provides leadership, discernment and coordination of the Sacramental Catechesis approach in the local context
- clarifies, guides and defines specific roles of the team members and supports their development
- is ideally a stand-alone role. However, the role could be an additional aspect of the roles of a Pastoral Associate, school staff member, APRIM, volunteer or employee of parish.

4.2 Practical Models of Sacramental Catechesis of Children

The *Family-Centred, Parish-Based and School-Supported* principles need to be based on contemporary theology, age-appropriate catechesis and be flexible in view of pastoral needs.

This section offers some practical models of Sacramental Catechesis in two parts:

- The essential features and possibilities are explored from the perspectives of each of the above three pastoral principles
- Examples of practical models are offered which reflect good practice in applying these pastoral principles.

4.2.1 Essential Features and Possibilities of Practical Models

The essential features and possibilities are explored from the perspectives of each of the pastoral principles:
Family-Centred, Parish-Based and School-Supported.

From Family-Centred Principle

The Church names the family as the domestic Church and parents as the first and on-going nurturers of faith in their children. Therefore, essential features and possibilities of a model include:

Essential Features

Families are engaged with opportunities for parent and child/ren participating together.

Families are encouraged to seek support in their faith journey through ongoing catechesis.

Families are interviewed (with a view to listen, build community, offer pastoral outreach and invite into partnership).

Children and parents/caregivers are seen as active partners.

Parents discern the readiness of their child with the support of others.

There are opportunities to make connections between family's own stories and scripture; and between family ritual and liturgy.

There are resources for take-home activities (e.g. prayer, reflection and learning).

Families are welcomed into parish life and worship through the experience of hospitality.

Sponsors are involved in the sacramental journey and options for involvement are provided for the extended family.

Reasonable flexibility is provided recognising the current realities of family life.

The family decides which parish community their child will be initiated into.

The parents commit to supporting their child/ren in the preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation.

Practical hospitality is offered to children and families – e.g. suppers, social gatherings, etc.

Some Possibilities

There are small family groups which are part of the Sacramental Catechesis process.

How will families be informed of the process?

How will a family with little or no experience of Church worship or practice be made to feel welcome?

How can the parish and school listen carefully and respectfully to the needs and desires of families?

How can families be invited into a deeper relationship with God, with themselves, others and with all of creation?

What follow-up will occur with families after the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation?

From Parish-Based Principle

The parish is the local Church community into which children and young people are being initiated. Therefore, essential features and possibilities of a model include:

Essential Features

The parish community is present as children and their families journey through Sacramental Catechesis and celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation.

Children and their families are invited, welcomed and supported into the life of the parish (including Sunday's Eucharist and Children's Liturgy of the Word).

Parents and catechists discern the readiness of the child. Families are interviewed (with a view to listen, build community, offer pastoral outreach and invite into partnership).

The parish assumes prime responsibility for leadership of the Sacramental Catechesis of children.

Parishioners are invited to become catechists and to support the sacramental journey of children and their families.

Catechists are formed in Sacramental Catechesis.

Liturgical celebrations of the Sacraments of Initiation occur in the parish context.

There is awareness of liturgical life of the Church when planning.

Sacramental Catechesis is complemented by other faith formation opportunities for children and adults within the parish.

The particular needs of children who attend non-Catholic schools are addressed.

There is a nine to fifteen month process of Sacramental Catechesis which is authentic and substantial.

The process of Sacramental Catechesis includes prayer rituals and provides opportunities to make links between family ritual and Church ritual.

Practical hospitality offered to children and families – e.g. suppers, social gatherings, etc.

Some Possibilities

Parish prayer partners are encouraged.

Parishioners are invited and formed to support or lead small group approach.

How could the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation be linked to the Liturgical Year?

What timeline will be used for the celebration of each of the Sacraments of Initiation?

Will this timeline take into account initial contact through to an evaluation post celebration for each of the Sacraments of Initiation?

How much notice will be given to families of all the relevant dates?

From School-Supported Principle

The local Catholic School is an integral part of Parish community and wider Church. Therefore, essential features and possibilities of a model include:

Essential Features

The school community is informed about and engaged in Sacramental Catechesis.

The Religious Education Curriculum supports and complements Sacramental Catechesis.

The school is represented on the Sacrament Team.

The Sacrament Team consults and collaborates with the local and regional Catholic school.

The school actively seeks out families to connect them with the Sacramental Catechesis process.

The school provides some resources within its means, e.g. personnel, site.

The school supports a nine to fifteen month process of Sacramental Catechesis which is parish-based, authentic and substantial.

The school provides opportunities that link family life and ritual with Church life and liturgy.

Some Possibilities

School personnel are catechists in the Sacramental Catechesis process.

The school provides appropriate financial support for employment for a Sacrament Coordinator or release hours towards this role.

How does the school relate to families in providing opportunities that invite them to consider Sacraments of Initiation?

What opportunities are there for exploring and supporting new expressions of being church?

How is the responsibility of Catechesis shared with in the Sacrament Team?

How is the the school involved in the parish-based catechesis process?

4.2.2 Examples of Practical Models

This section provides a range of ways that honour the pastoral principles of *Family-Centred, Parish-Based and School-Supported*. This allows for flexibility in structuring Sacramental Catechesis in the local parish context. These models can be adapted at the local level and can be adjusted for a regional approach (e.g. with clusters of parishes) as well as for parishes without a Catholic school.

When choosing a model, what are some considerations to take into account in your local parish context?

Which of these models fit the current realities of your local parish and school?

Is there something from another model that could be incorporated into your current model to enhance it?

What could be the advantages/disadvantages of each model in your parish context?

Are all sessions of your program for parents and children?

Are some just for adults?

When and where do these meetings occur?

Is there a session specifically for sponsors?

What is currently available in your community for families to be involved with?

How is this communicated to families?

When and how could a post Sacraments of Initiation celebration occur?



*Workshop
Focussed*

PAGE 18



*Home Group
Focussed*

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*Weekly Session
Focussed*

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*Sunday Liturgy
Focussed*

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*Parish Cluster
Focussed*

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MODEL A

Workshop Focussed

In this model, Sacramental Catechesis takes place primarily through a variety of workshops of half or one day duration with parents and children working together as a family in the context of the Christian community.

PRIOR

- Send out information and calling for expressions of interest for preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation through the parish bulletin and local schools newsletters within the parish boundaries
- Parent/Carers General Information Night
- Registration and pastoral interviews – Parents and child meet with priest or coordinator
- Discern readiness, answer questions, handout important printed information
- Register.

ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

GATHERING SESSIONS 1

- *Parent Night* – Introduction to Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion
- *Family Workshop* – Catechesis about Baptism & Confirmation
- *Ritual of Remembering Baptism & Registration Sunday* – Children present registration forms to priest & receive a blessing at a Parish Mass.

GATHERING SESSIONS 2

- *Family Workshop* – Catechesis about Eucharist
- *Ritual of Belonging at Eucharist*: Candidates are welcomed, called by name and receive a blessing. This is followed by small gathering after Masses to meet parishioners.

Family Session 2
EUCCHARIST

ADVENT

HOME
ACTIVITIES

Ritual of
Belonging
(PRAYER PARTNER
SUNDAY)

CHRISTIAN INITIATION CYCLE

Children's Liturgy
of the Word

Participation In
Community Life

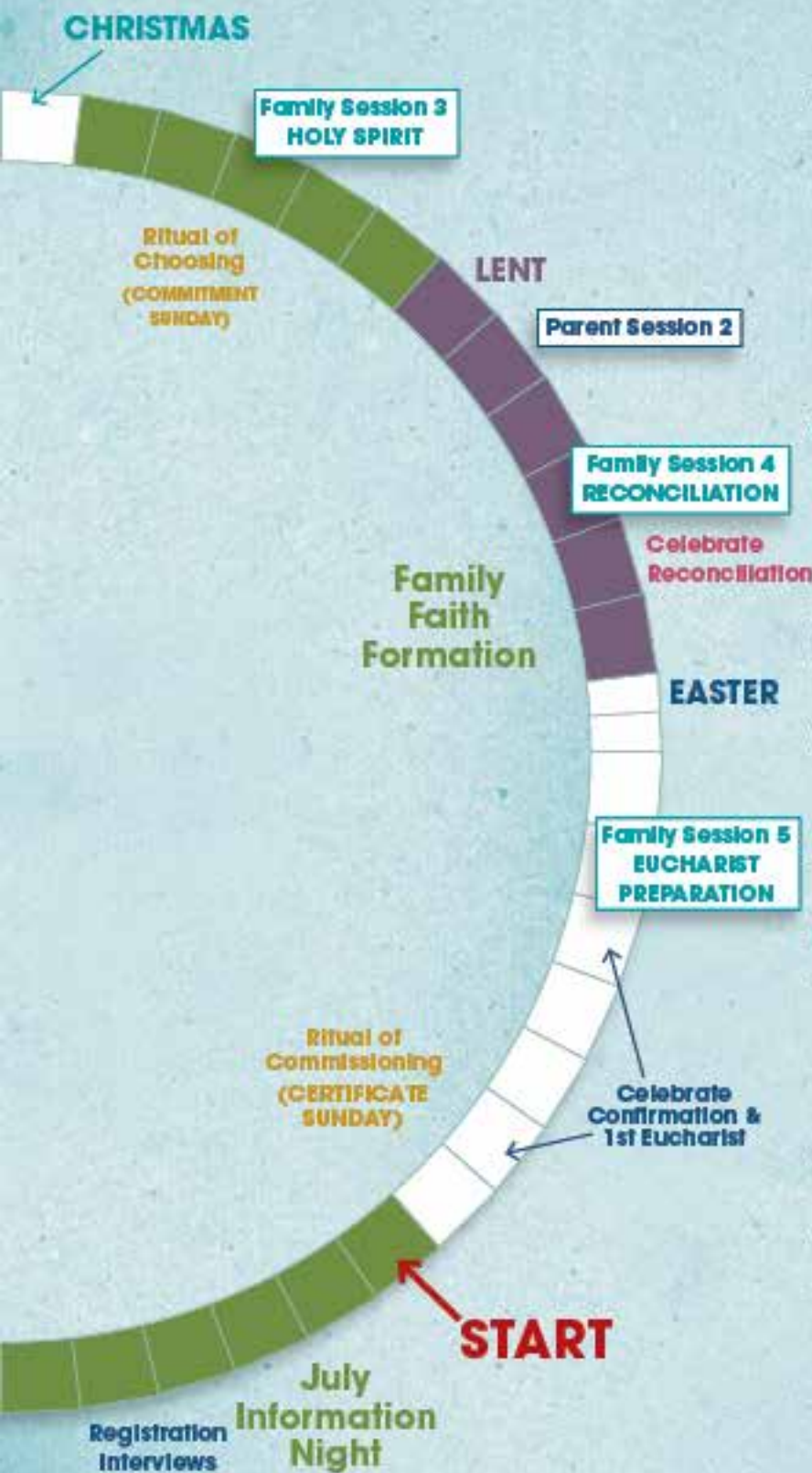
HOME
ACTIVITIES

Ritual of
Remembering
Baptism
(REGISTRATION
SUNDAY)

Family Session 1
BAPTISM &
CONFIRMATION

Parent Session 1

Workshop Focussed



GATHERING SESSIONS 3

- *Family Workshop* – Catechesis about the Holy Spirit and Confirmation
- *Ritual of Choosing*. Candidates sign their names committing to continuing their preparation to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation, special prayers and blessing at a Parish Mass.

GATHERING SESSIONS 4

- *Parent Night* – Reconciliation
- *Family Workshop* – Catechesis about Reconciliation. Preparing for the Sacrament.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

GATHERING SESSIONS 5

- *Family Workshop* – Eucharist Preparation.
- ## CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

POST CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

- *Family Mass with Ritual of Commissioning*:
 - Presentation of certificates
 - Special blessing to send forth to live the Gospels
 - Gathering with parishioners after Mass
- Group gathering to reflect back on the experience
- Families are invited and encouraged to consider ways of becoming more deeply involved in the life and mission of the parish.

(note: order of topics of Gathering Sessions can be adapted)

Acknowledgment of diagram
LeFevre Catholic Community, SA

MODEL B

Home Group Focussed

In this model, Sacramental Catechesis takes place primarily through families in home groups. The experience of small group Christian community is an important way of receiving the message of the Good News of Jesus and being welcomed into a sacramental encounter.

PRIOR

- Send out information and calling for expressions of interest for preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation through the parish bulletin and local schools newsletters within the parish boundaries
- Parent/Carers General Information Night
- Registration and pastoral interviews – Parents and child meet with priest or coordinator
- Discern readiness, answer questions, handout important printed information
- Register.

ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

- Earlier selection and formation of home group leaders
- Whole group gathering where leaders of home groups meet with home group hosts and organise home groups, dates and places of meetings
- Formation for each sacrament
- Families meet in homes eight times a year
- Whole group family workshop for each sacrament
- Family Masses.

POST CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

- *Family Mass with Ritual of Commissioning:*
 - Presentation of certificates
 - Special blessing to send forth to live the Gospels
 - Gathering with parishioners after Mass
- Group gathering to reflect back on the experience
- Families are invited and encouraged to consider ways of becoming more deeply involved in the life and mission of the parish.

MODEL C

Weekly Session Focussed

In this model, Sacramental Catechesis takes place primarily in regular weekly sessions over 3 terms either afterschool or on a weekend for 90 minutes. This model takes into consideration those children who do not have access to the ongoing Religious Education program in a Catholic school. The children come together to break open Scripture and then move into two groups: one for weekly catechesis and the other for weekly Sacramental Catechesis. Thus, catechesis is seen as a part of a life-long journey within a community.

PRIOR

- Send out information and calling for expressions of interest for preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation through the parish bulletin and local schools newsletters within the parish boundaries
- Parent/Carers General Information Night
- Registration and pastoral interviews – Parents and child meet with priest or coordinator
- Discern readiness, answer questions, handout important printed information
- Register.

ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

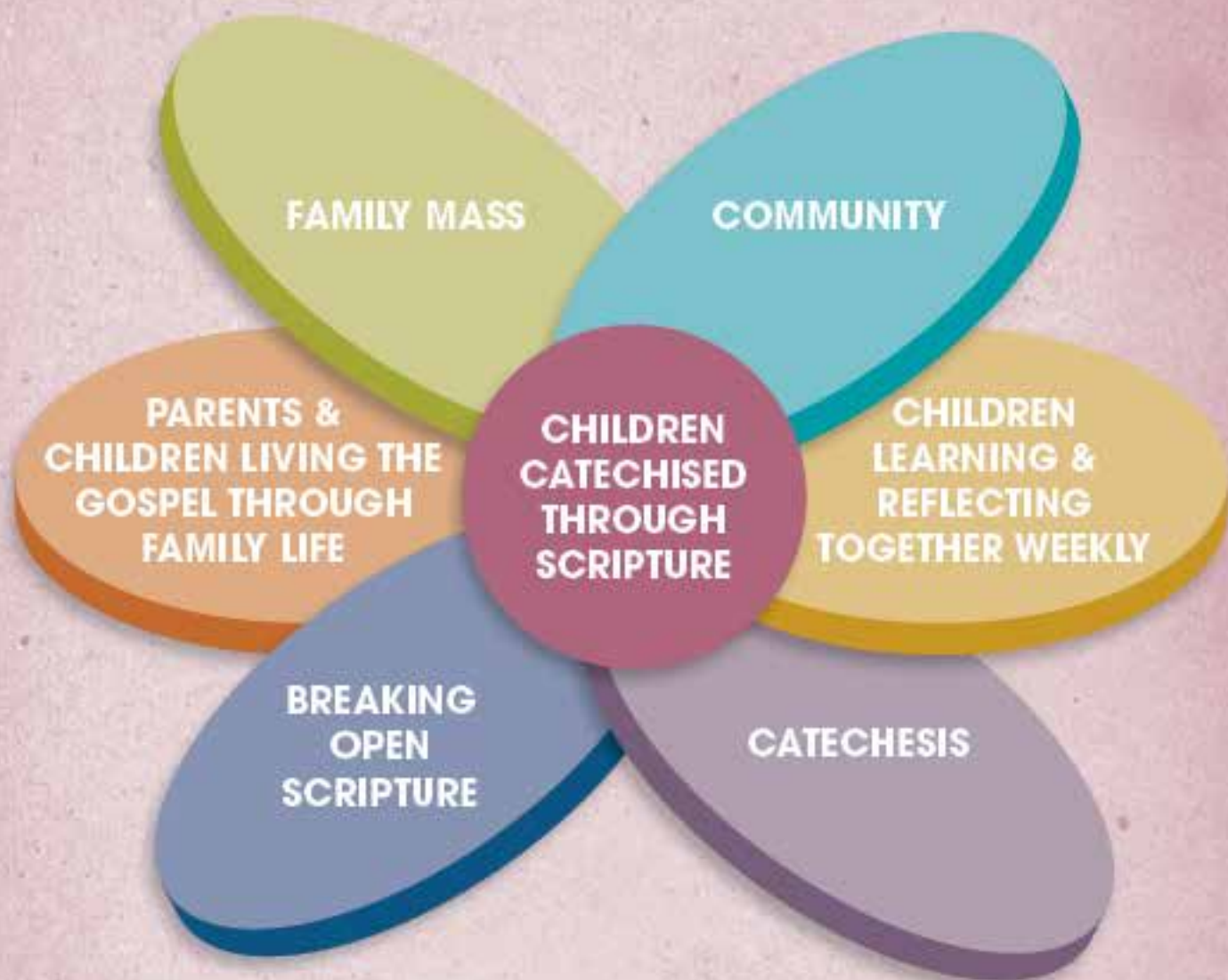
- Sessions are held weekly after school or on a weekend for 90 minutes over eight weeks every term
- Whole group gathering time at the beginning of each session
- Breaking open Scripture through the process of *Children's Liturgy of the Word* with the whole group

- Children are divided into smaller groups according to their age and stage of catechesis (Catechesis/Sacramental Catechesis)
- Session with children
- Reflection with parents and child/ren
- A Family Mass is prepared by the group once per term.

POST CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

- *Family Mass with Ritual of Commissioning:*
 - Presentation of certificates
 - Special blessing to send forth to live the Gospels
 - Gathering with parishioners after Mass
- Group gathering to reflect back on the experience
- Families are invited and encouraged to consider ways of becoming more deeply involved in the life and mission of the parish.

Weekly Session Focussed



MODEL D

Sunday Liturgy Focussed

In this model, Sacramental Catechesis is integrated into the liturgy of the Sunday Eucharist with participation of the family within the life of the parish. The key elements of providing catechesis are weekly Children's Liturgy of the Word and the homily at the monthly Family Mass. This is reinforced in the workshops offered before or after the Family Mass.

PRIOR

- Send out information and calling for expressions of interest for preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation through the parish bulletin and local schools newsletters within the parish boundaries
- Parent/Carers General Information Night
- Registration and pastoral interviews – Parents and child meet with priest or coordinator
- Discern readiness, answer questions, handout important printed information
- Register.

ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

- Children's Liturgy of the Word each week
- A particular Mass each month is celebrated as a Family Mass. The homily is directed to the children by the priest or catechist or a complementary approach of both priest and catechist
- An extended catechesis session in the form of a family workshop with a meal either before or after the Family Mass.

POST CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

- *Family Mass with Ritual of Commissioning:*
 - Presentation of certificates
 - Special blessing to send forth to live the Gospels
 - Gathering with parishioners after Mass
- Group gathering to reflect back on the experience
- Families are invited and encouraged to consider ways of becoming more deeply involved in the life and mission of the parish.



Sunday Liturgy Focussed

MODEL
D

weekly
**CHILDREN'S
LITURGY
OF THE WORD**

monthly
**FAMILY MASS
HOMILIES**

SACRAMENTAL

CATECHESIS
PRIMARILY IN
AND THROUGH
THE SUNDAY
LITURGY

central
**EXPERIENCE
OF THE
COMMUNITY
GATHERED AND
CELEBRATING**

supplementary
**FAMILY
WORKSHOPS**

MODEL E

Parish Cluster Focussed

In this model, Sacramental Catechesis takes into account parish clusters in which there are several Catholic, State and Independent schools. It consists of small family groups which are formed across the Mass Centres in which the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated. The School Religious Education Learning Outcomes support the timing of this process.

PRIOR

- Send out information and calling for expressions of interest for preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation through the parish bulletin and local schools newsletters within the parish boundaries
- Parent/Carers General Information Night
- Registration and pastoral interviews – Parents and child meet with priest or coordinator
- Discern readiness, answer questions, handout important printed information
- Register.

ELEMENTS OF THE MODEL

- Earlier selection and formation of family group leaders
- Gathering of parents and children to meet family group leaders, to form small family groups and to organise place, dates and time of meetings
- Presentation of candidates to parish community at weekend Eucharist
- One formation meeting per Sacrament of Initiation for leader of each family group
- One workshop per Sacrament of Initiation offered twice provided by various members of the Sacrament Team.

- Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated across Mass Centres and in family groups where possible
- School Religious Education Learning Outcomes support the timing of this process
- Information forwarded to participants via email, parish newsletter and Catholic school newsletters and websites
- Schools provide venues for evening meetings
- Regular meetings held for the Sacrament Team to plan workshops, celebrations and to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

POST CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS

- *Family Mass with Ritual of Commissioning:*
 - Presentation of certificates
 - Special blessing to send forth to live the Gospels
 - Gathering with parishioners after Mass
- Group gathering to reflect back on the experience
- Families are invited and encouraged to consider ways of becoming more deeply involved in the life and mission of the parish.

Please note: All other models could be adapted for parish clusters.

Parish Cluster Focussed



4.3 Resources, Programs and Support

The model and process of Sacramental Catechesis which are adopted at the local context can be expressed and supported by various programs and resources.

What current resources and programs are available?

What resources and programs are presently being used?

How well do they support the pastoral principles and strategies of this framework?

How can new quality resources be explored and developed to meet identified needs?

Support for the selection of appropriate resources and programs is available from the *Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office* (Catholic Education Office), the *Catholic Resource and Information Service* (CRIS) and the *Office for Worship* (see section 4.3.4).

Sacramental Catechesis is complemented by the Religious Education undertaken by those students attending Catholic schools. Information about the Religious Education curriculum (including learning about sacraments) is available from the local Catholic School and from *Crossways: the Religious Education Framework for SA Catholic Schools*, which is available at the following link:

<http://online.cesanel.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-3281>

There are many resources and programs publically available for Sacramental Catechesis and discernment is recommended when choosing or adapting these to ensure that they

- align with the principles of this framework
- are contemporary and age-appropriate
- are accessible for children and families
- are faithful to the Catholic Tradition.

In addition, the *Crossways* document, *Resourcing the Religious Education Learning Area*, may assist with practical ideas, guidelines and a checklist in this discernment; it can be found at the following link:

<http://online.cesanel.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-17246>

4.3.1 Catechetical Resources and Programs on Sacraments:

Sacramental Catechesis includes:

- connecting the meaning of sacraments with faith formation
- explaining the link between the essence of the Sacraments and lived experience
- inviting people to a deeper relationship with Jesus, the faith community and the mission of the Church.

A foundational Archdiocesan resource for the Sacramental Catechesis of children is *Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide (2014)*. Please refer to Appendix 6.1.

There are quality text, audio visual and online catechetical resources to facilitate an encounter with the person of Jesus and Sacramental Catechesis which can be categorised under the following headings:

FOR CHILDREN:

Scripture stories
Picture books
Big books
Poster sets
Artistic and creative expressions
Christian meditation and prayer

FOR ADULTS:

Faith tradition
Scripture stories
Contemporary understanding of Christian Initiation

There are various programs publically available for Sacramental Catechesis and some align well with the principles of this framework. *The Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office* (Catholic Education Office) can offer advice about appropriate programs or how to design a suitable program which may draw upon the local parish program whilst keeping in line with the principles of this framework.



4.3.2 Family Catechesis Resources:

The *General Directory for Catechesis* states that:

"Family Catechesis offers a Christian education that is more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured." (para 255)

Also, in the document, *Lumen Gentium*, we find that:

"In what might be regarded as the domestic Church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They must foster the vocation which is proper to each child, and this with special care...". (para 11)

As a faith community, it is the responsibility of the parish to nurture and support the faith and life of parents as they, in turn, share their faith with their children.

Family catechesis occurs through:

- family conversations about life and faith
- family prayer
- parents being the first and enduring nurturers of faith of their children
- the connection of day to day experience of life with the process of Sacramental Catechesis
- reflection on family experiences in the light of the Gospels.

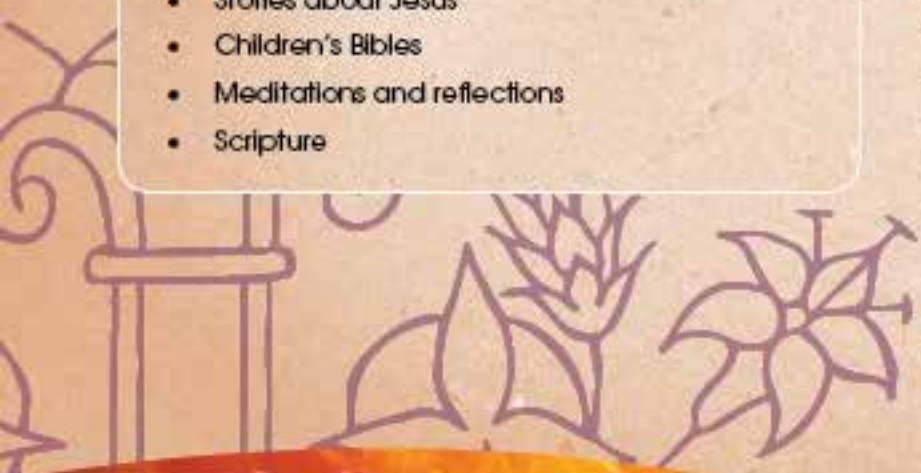
Text, audio visual and online resources can be categorised under the following headings:

- Family prayer
- Family faith activities
- Stories about Jesus
- Children's Bibles
- Meditations and reflections
- Scripture

What help could be of value to parents for family prayer and conversations about life and faith?

What day-to-day links can be made for families to help them connect with the Gospel?

Are Family Masses part of the life of your parish?



4.3.3 Liturgical Catechesis Resources

The General Directory for Catechesis states:

"Liturgical catechesis prepares for the sacraments by promoting a deeper understanding and experience of the liturgy. (It) explains the contents for the prayers, the meaning of the signs and gestures, educates to active participation, contemplation and silence. It must be regarded as an 'eminent kind of catechesis.'" (pp 71-72)

Hence, liturgical catechesis is an important method for preparing children for the sacraments, since it is in the very celebration of the rite (liturgy) that the encounter between God and the child takes place.

This means the richness of the rite must be 'unpacked' according to the capacity of those celebrating the sacrament in order to enable their "full, conscious and active participation".

Liturgical catechesis consists of three stages:

- Catechesis in preparation for the sacramental liturgy by using the very rite itself (symbols, gestures and words) as the 'content' for catechising,
- Catechesis through the liturgy by means of a beautiful celebration of the rite itself,
- Catechesis from the liturgy by reflecting back on the experience after the sacrament has been celebrated in order to deepen it and gain further insight into how it calls us to live our lives. This final stage is also called "mystagogy." *

This 3-fold method of catechesis in the initiation of children is also enriched by

- Regular celebrations of the Liturgy of the Word where the child is familiarised with stories of Jesus from the scriptures
- Connecting sacramental celebrations to the liturgical season
- Using music as an essential aspect of the three stages of liturgical catechesis
- Involving parents in the preparation of children for the Sacraments of Initiation as also mentioned in the models.

Resources for liturgical catechesis include:

- The Rites of the Sacraments
- Children's Lectionary and Missal
- Children's Prayers
- Liturgical calendar
- Liturgical music.

What will be done to welcome and assist families through liturgical celebrations?

In Sacramental Catechesis, how are families assisted to understand the liturgy?

4.3.4 Support

Support for the selection of appropriate resources and programs is available from:

Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office (Catholic Education Office)

112 Kintore Street Thebarton SA 5031

Phone

(08) 8301 6195 or (08) 8301 6110

Website

www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/schools/catholic-education-sa/family-and-parish-based-catechesis

The Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office can also offer

- training and formation in this framework
- assistance in the initial establishment of the Sacrament Team (for example, clarifying roles, responsibilities, time parameters, team building)
- foundational theological formation and teaching methods for catechists
- support for the development of local programs and resources
- ongoing support for Sacramental Catechesis.

Religious Education Team Catholic Education SA

112 Kintore Street Thebarton SA 5031

Phone

(08) 8301 6659

Email

religiouseducation@cesa.catholic.edu.au

Website

www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/religious-education

Office for Worship

127 South Road Thebarton SA 5031

Phone

(08) 8152 7806

Email

worship@ow.adelaide.catholic.org.au

Website

www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-faith/office-for-worship

The Catholic Resource and Information Service (CRIS)

112 Kintore Street Thebarton SA 5031

Phone

(08) 8301 6869

Email

cris@cesa.catholic.edu.au

Website

www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-faith/catholic-resource-and-information-service

Other support resources can be obtained from

Pauline Books and Media

27 Hindmarsh Square Adelaide 5000

Phone

(08) 8223 2735

Website

www.paulinebooks.com.au



5 Glossary

Catechesis	The process of growing towards maturity of faith with others.
Catechist	A person called to teach the essentials of the Christian faith.
Children's Liturgy of the Word	The proclamation and the breaking open of the Scriptures specifically at the level of understanding of the child; often conducted during Sunday Mass parallel to the normal Liturgy of Word.
Christian Initiation	The process by which an individual comes to full membership in the Christian community.
Contemporary Theology	'Faith seeking understanding' which is based on current Church teaching and informed by mainstream Christian theologians.
Discernment	Prayerfully seeking insight that leads to a good decision as to whether or not something is in harmony with Christian life, values and where God is calling.
Eucharist	Means thanksgiving and refers to the consecrated bread and wine; can also refer to the Mass.
Evangelising Mission	The entire faith-inspired process of witnessing to, sharing and living the Good News of Jesus with others so that the Reign of God may become more realised in the world.
Evaluate Program Effectiveness	To reflect and critique whether the program has reached the intended outcomes and needs.
First Holy Communion	The experience of receiving the Eucharist (consecrated bread and wine) for the first time.
Formation	The process in which faith develops and continues to grow; another word for 'catechesis.'
Graced Moment	A moment in which God's free unmerited loving gift of God's own life and presence is experienced.
Immersion	To be welcomed and embraced into an ongoing encounter with Jesus throughout the life-long faith journey.
Life-Long Process	A process that is not short term with a conclusion but one which extends throughout life's journey.
Liturgical Year	The annual cycle of seasons and feasts beginning with the first Sunday of Advent.
Liturgy	The official public worship of the Church in communion with Christ and members of the Church.
Local Catholic Community	The group of Catholic Christians who gather in a local area to share faith and participate in worship, community life and mission – this usually is understood as parish, and is inclusive of any Catholic school in the parish.

6

Appendices

Appendix 6.1

Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church for Children and Infants in the Archdiocese of Adelaide (2014)

This document looks at the current experience of initiation of infants and children in the Adelaide Archdiocese in the light of the call to renewal made by the Second Vatican Council.

It speaks to families and parishes as they prepare to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and first Holy Communion, and includes a section on the discernment of readiness for children to celebrate these sacraments (see pages 17 and 18). There is also a section on the participation in the sacraments of children with intellectual disabilities (see Appendix 3). A model series of preparation meetings for families presenting their infant children for Baptism is also included (see Appendix 2).

Practical guidelines for all those who have a role in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation – parents, priests, catechists and teachers in parishes and schools, godparents and sponsors, the whole parish community – are provided to assist in the journey of infants and children into full participation in the faith life of the Church.

The Initiation of Children and Infants into the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Adelaide can be viewed on the Office for Worship website:

www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-faith/office-for-worship

It is complemented with the Pastoral Framework provided by this document.

Appendix 6.2

Baptism and Further Christian Initiation of Children of Catechetical Age

Christian Initiation is the responsibility of the whole Catholic community. It is the formal process through which new members are welcomed into the community, into a shared story and beliefs, and into the mission of Jesus.

The rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is adapted for children who were not baptised as infants and who have attained the age of reason, are of catechetical age and who are now able to participate more fully in the process of initiation.

The RCIA adapted for children requires the active participation of parents, godparents, and the whole community. In this way, children know and understand that they have the support and the experience of others who have been fully initiated and who are actively involved in the life, worship and mission of the community.

Using the RCIA as the model for the initiation of children of catechetical age, the following phases are involved:

Inquiry:

This is the first stage of the process and is a time for asking questions, finding out about the life and mission of the Catholic community, and moving towards a discernment and decision-making about readiness to go ahead with more formal catechesis.

Catechuminate:

This is a formal time of preparation that calls the candidate to attend classes, to develop a prayer life and learn about the Catholic faith with a view to deepening a sense of being called to conversion and commitment as a disciple. Children of catechetical age are invited to identify with the community by taking part in the liturgy and life of the community. An essential part of this process is through catechesis about the liturgy, getting to know Jesus through reflection on the Gospels.

Purification and Enlightenment:

Children of catechetical age undergo a conversion of heart and mind, leading to active involvement in the life of the community. Since they have reached the age of reason, they are able to give their consent and express their willingness to participate in formation and celebrate the sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. This process occurs in stages and is marked by liturgical rites that acknowledge the awakening of faith in the lives of the children. Lectionary-based catechesis provides children with a powerful way of learning about and engaging in a deeper relationship with Jesus.

At this stage of their preparation, children are supported in reflecting on their thoughts and actions in the light of the Gospel, expressing sorrow and seeking forgiveness for wrong-doing; they continue their prayerful preparation for the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

6

Appendices

Appendix 6.3

This document is a result of the Working Party established in 2011 as described on page four in section one.

Membership of the Working Party

Fr Charles Gauci (Chair of the Council of Priests and Chair of Working Party)

Fr Phillip Marshall (Vicar General)

Cathy Whewell (Chancellor)

Heather Carey (Chancellor)

Dr Paul Sharkey (Chancellor and Director of Catholic Education South Australia)

Michael Vial (Coordinator Religious Education, CEO)

Carmen Balales (Project Leader, Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office, CEO)

Val De Brenni (Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office, CEO)

Jennifer Seal fdnsc (Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office, CEO)

Kathy Horan (APRIM, St Joseph's School Hindmarsh and Liturgical Commission Representative)

Jenny O'Brien (Office for Worship)

Ilsa Nelcinieks rsm (Office for Worship)

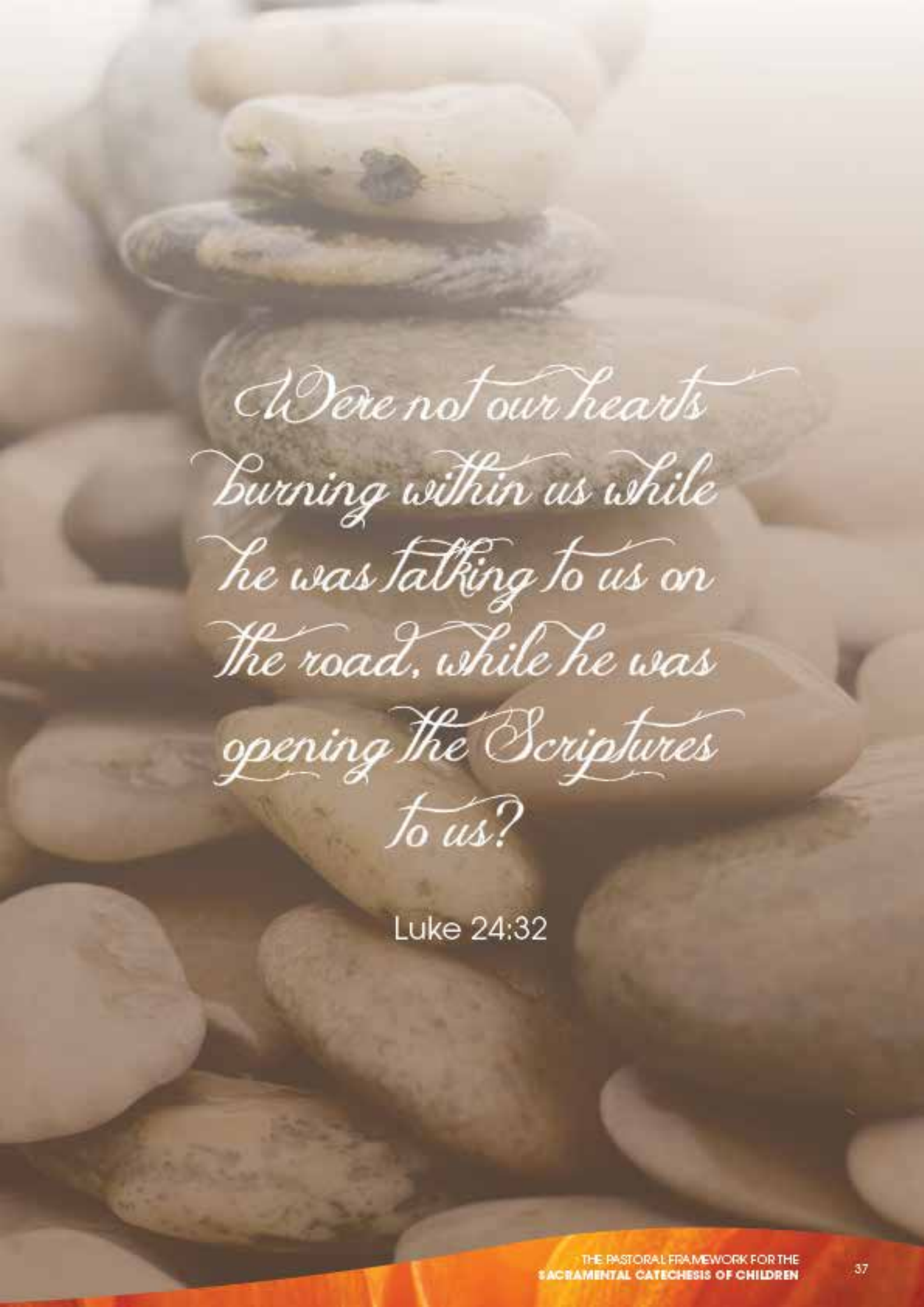
Allison Gore (APRIM, St Therese School, Colonel Light Gardens)

Ann Bliss (Federation of Catholic School Parent Communities)

Fr Brendan Connell cp (Parish Priest, Glen Osmond)

Marie Victory rsj (Pastoral Associate, Hectorville Parish)

Judy Fernandez (Faith Formation Coordinator, Le Fevre Catholic Community)

A stack of smooth, light-colored stones is the central focus, with a background of more stones. The text is overlaid on the stones in a white, elegant script font.

*Were not our hearts
burning within us while
he was talking to us on
the road, while he was
opening the Scriptures
to us?*

Luke 24:32



This Pastoral Framework for the Sacramental
Catechesis of Children was issued by
Most Reverend Phillip Wilson DD JCL
Archbishop of Adelaide.

September 2014

An e-copy of this document is available at the website of:
Family and Parish Based Catechesis Office
Office for Worship
found at www.adelaide.catholic.org.au

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