Church Documents on Catechesis

The Vatican Council closed on December 8, 1965 and produced sixteen documents including a declaration on Education. Vatican II Council called for a renewal of catechesis and for the development of a directory that would promote the basic tasks and purpose of catechesis. The General Catechetical Directory was published from Rome in 1971. Since that document we would see thirteen other documents, eight from Rome and five from the Bishops of the United States. All of these documents give guidance and direction to Diocesan and parish catechetical programs for all ages.

To Teach as Jesus Did - U. S. Bishops, 1972
This document fostered the three basic tasks of catechesis: Message, Community and Service.

Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education- U.S. Bishops, 1973
Presentation of the content of faith for Religious Education Programs for children.

On Evangelization in the Modern World, 1975
This Encyclical by Pope Paul VI, presented a new understanding of evangelization for Catholics, as a process of bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new.

Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory of the United States, 1979
This document continues to give guidance to for the development of parish and diocesan catechetical programs in the United States.

On Catechesis in Our Time, 1979
This Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II came from a 1977 Synod of-Bishops on catechesis and contains a 'vision of catechesis for the universal church and the place of this activity in the context of the pastoral life in the Church.

U.S. Bishops document that gives guidance and direction for catechetical programs for adolescents.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 1988

This document from Rome restored the process of initiation, with a focus on conversion, importance of scripture, along with various stages, rituals, celebration and mystagogia.


This document from Rome talks about what makes Catholic schools distinctive. What makes them different is the religious dimension in the entire educational endeavor, the personal development of students, the relationship between faith and culture and the integration of all knowledge in the light of gospel values.

Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community, 1990.

This Roman document affirms the centrality and importance of adult catechesis for the Church.


This U.S. document gave guidelines for the development of catechetical materials in the United States in terms of the dimension of catechesis, principles and criteria for doctrinally sound catechetical materials and guidelines for presenting sound doctrine.

Guide for Catechist 1993

This Roman document deals with the vocation and formation of catechists.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1994

“This catechism aims at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals, in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the whole of the Church’s Tradition.” Prologue Catechism #11 The catechism is organized around four basic pillars: the baptismal profession of faith, the Creed, (The Profession of Faith); the sacraments of faith
(Celebration of the Christian Mystery); Living the life of faith, commandments/beatitudes (Life in Christ); and the prayer of the believer, the Lord’s Prayer (Christian Prayer).

**The General Directory for Catechesis 1997**

This Roman document updated the 1971 document and gave a new vision and guidelines for passing on the Catholic Faith Tradition today for the entire world. This document gives vision and direction to diocesan and parish catechetical programs. In implementing this document we are to not only foster the common passing on of the Catholic faith but our identity as Catholics.

**Follow the Way of Love, A Pastoral Message of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to Families**

An encouraging message to families on the realities of today’s society from the U.S. It offers support and urges mutuality in marriage roles, and addresses the challenges of living faithfully, giving life, and taking the time to balance work and family obligations.

**Sons and Daughters of the Light-A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults**

Men and women in their late teens, twenties, and thirties bring tremendous gifts to the Church. With this in mind, the U.S. Bishops address the life situation of these individuals and offer a comprehensive and workable plan of action for connecting young adults with the Church, Jesus Christ, the mission of the Church in the world, and a peer community.

**Renewing the Vision, A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry-1997**

This USCC builds on the 1976 document *Vision of Youth Ministry*, and see to respond to the new challenges and opportunities of our day by giving a blueprint for the continued development of effective ministry with young and older adolescents.
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us- A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States-1999

The U.S. Bishops renewed their commitment to adult faith formation by addressing the opportunities, challenges and concerns for this important area of catechesis. Goals, principles, and content approaches are provided to help diocesan and parish leaders to reach out to adults on a life-long journey of faith.

National Directory for Catechesis-United States Bishops-2005

The U. S. Bishops published in July 2005 a new National Directory for Catechesis. This document updates the 1979 document and places catechesis within the church’s mission of evangelization. The document contains guidelines for the catechesis of all the sacraments, for the catechist and the different roles in catechesis, those being catechized, as well as suggestions for organization.

United States Catechism for Adults-United States Bishops-2006

The U.S. Bishops published in July 2006 a national Catechism for adults. This catechism follows the outline of the Catechism of the Catholic Church but also includes a catechetical process for covering the topics with adults.