



NCCL
Accompaniment
in Faith

PRACTICES + SKILLS FOR CATECHISTS & EDUCATORS

Catechist & Educator Guide

(September 2026)

- Part 1. Designed for Today's Catechists and Educators
- Part 2. Focused on the Essential Roles of Catechists and Educators
- Part 3. Developed around Your Learning Needs

Assessment Guide: *Competencies for Teaching and Forming Faith: A Guide for Parish Catechists & School Educators*

Correlation Guide: *Competences Correlated with Series 1 of the Accompaniment Videos*

Website: www.ncclcatholic.org/accompaniment

National Community of Catechetical Leaders

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Accompaniment in Faith: Practices and Skills for Catechists & Educators

A catechist is a person of faith who lives the baptismal call by sharing the faith with others. They help bring others to Christ through the traditions and teachings of the Catholic faith. A catechist realizes God's voice in this call to serve and recognizes the ongoing need to grow in a relationship with Christ and deepen an understanding of the Catholic faith.

(Pope Francis, 2021)

Part 1. Designed for Today's Catechists and Educators

Accompaniment in Faith is a video-based series designed for parish catechists and school educators with essential practices and skills for teaching and forming the faith of children and adolescents. The goal of each Video is to develop one particular practice or skill that is essential for engaging children or adolescents in learning and growing in faith. The focus is on the “how to” of being a catechist and educator.

Accompaniment in Faith is designed for today's adult learners. Its development was informed by contemporary thinking about adult learning and has the following features:

- ◆ It is designed for **self-directed, just-in-time** learning. You select the Video programs based on the diagnosis of your personal learning needs and the areas you need to develop proficiency. Then create your own pathways for learning. Whenever you need to understand and develop a particular skill or practice for effective teaching and faith formation, the Videos and Guides are ready to assist them.
- ◆ It utilizes a **microlearning** approach that organizes content into smaller, focused learning experiences – each built around a single concept, practice, or skill rather than a long-form program or course with multiple sessions. Each Video is 15 minutes in length or shorter and comes with an accompanying Guide of ideas and practices for application. The short duration of the Videos are designed to fit into small windows of time: before a teaching session, during a lunch break, late in the evening, and even during the “waiting times” for family members during the week. The short duration of the Video lowers the barrier to starting – a 5-10 minute Video feels far less daunting than committing to a long course, so you are more likely to actually begin (and finish).
- ◆ It provides the Video programs **online 24x7** at www.ncclcatholic.org/accompaniment. It is designed for maximum flexibility in scheduling personal learning. The Videos can be viewed on a laptop, tablet, or phone.
- ◆ It provides focused content. Each Video is a **standalone** topic but connected to the other Video topics. Each Video works on its own, but a series of them can build toward a larger skill or body of knowledge. You can combine Videos into **multi-topic** learning programs.
- ◆ It includes a reproducible **Guide** that accompanies the Video by summarizing ideas directly from the Video presentation, and offering an easy-to-use checklist for applying the practices, skills, and methods to teaching. Many Guides also include sample activities that can be used to apply what is presented in the Video to teaching children and/or adolescents.

- ◆ It encourages immediate application of the new knowledge and skills to teaching children or adolescents, building your confidence and proficiency. Each Video program guides you toward the practical application of the knowledge they have learned.

Part 2. Focused on the Essential Roles of Parish Catechists and School Educators

Accompaniment in Faith project is focused on developing video-based learning for the three roles of the catechist and educator as presented in the *Directory for Catechesis*, paragraph 113 (Vatican, 2020). Each of these three roles points to the particular knowledge, skills, practices, and methods necessary for catechists and educators. The essential roles in teaching and forming the Catholic faith of young people include the following. (Summarized from paragraph 113 in the *Directory for Catechesis*)

1. **A witness of faith and keeper of the memory of God.**

Catechists and educators are living examples of faith who remember and share God's story. They have personally experienced the goodness of the Gospel through their relationship with Jesus. Because of that, they hold onto this experience, grow from it, and show it to others – becoming an example for people to look up to. Part of their job is remembering the long history of God's relationship with humanity, helping others remember it too, and using that memory to spread the message of faith. It's not enough to just talk about faith – they need to actually live it out, since that's what makes people trust what they're teaching. And even though they know they're imperfect and rely on God's mercy just like anyone else, they are a source of hope for others.

2. **A teacher and a mystagogue.**

Catechists and educators introduce people to God as revealed through the story of Jesus's death and resurrection. Like Jesus himself, who was a teacher, the catechist has two tasks: teaching the actual content of the faith (the beliefs and traditions), and also helping people genuinely experience and connect with that mystery on a deeper level. This means helping people understand who they are as humans and what they're ultimately here for, teaching them about Christ, and walking them through the Christian life and Catholic worship.

3. **An accompanier and educator.**

Catechists and educators are companions who walk alongside people. They are entrusted with guiding others on their faith journey. They are skilled at accompanying people – listening well, understanding how people grow and change, and being a patient companion who doesn't rush the process. Staying open to God's guidance, they help the people in their care mature in their faith over time. Because catechists understand people deeply, they relate to their joys, hopes, sadness, and struggles, and are able to connect those human experiences back to the message of the Gospel.

The development of the curriculum and Videos for *Accompaniment in Faith* have been guided by these three roles. We seek to equip you with the knowledge, skills, practices, and methods necessary for the three roles of catechists and educators, organized around these topics.

1. Spiritual Formation for Catechists and Educators
2. Religious and Spiritual Growth of Children and Young People
3. Practices for Teaching the Bible
4. Practices for Teaching the Catholic Faith
 - *Creed, Jesus, Sacraments, Morality, Catholic Social Teaching, Prayer*

5. Practices and Skills for Teaching
 - *Planning and Preparation for Teaching, Creating the Right Climate for Learning, Designing for Different Styles of Learning, Engaging Children in the Learning Experience, Building Relationships and Community, Teaching Learners with Disabilities*
6. Creative Learning Methods
 - *Launching the Learning, Art of Questioning, Collaborative Learning, Inquiry Based Learning. Nurturing Wonder, Engaging the Symbols of Faith, Teaching with Images, Closing Learning Well*
7. Practices and Skills for Forming Faith
 - *Sharing Bible Stories with Children and Teens, Praying with Children, , Leading Prayer, Preparing for Worship: Four Movements of the Mass, Preparing for Worship: Signs, Symbols, and Gestures, Preparing for the Liturgical Year, Telling your Faith Story, Leading Service Projects, Practices and Strategies for Learners with Disabilities*

The focus of *Accompaniment in Faith* is on the practices and skills for teaching and faith formation. For the biblical and theological formation NCCL recommends consulting your diocesan catechetical office or school office for learning recommendations. Many dioceses provide courses for catechists and educators on Scripture and the study of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Dioceses can recommend in-person or online courses offered by colleges, universities and seminaries.

Part 3. Developed for Creating Individual Learning Plans

You can use *Accompaniment in Faith* Videos for **self-directed, just-in-time learning**. If you need to know “how to” use a particular practice or skill, just select the Video and download the Guide: watch, read, reflect, and apply. Whenever you need to understand and develop a particular skill or practice for effective teaching and faith formation, the Videos and Guides are ready to assist them.

You can also develop a personal **plan** for continuing learning by discerning your learning needs using the ***Competencies for Teaching and Forming Faith*** and then selecting Videos and other resources to help you develop your knowledge, skills, and/or practices for teaching and forming faith.

Discerning Learning Needs

This Assessment Guide (in the next section) is designed to help you identify your strengths as a parish catechist or school educator and identify areas for learning and growth. As you complete this Assessment Guide keep in mind the teaching and formation work you are doing. Keep your focus on the children or adolescents you are working with and consider the knowledge, skills, and practices that are required to effectively teach and nurture the faith of your group. Not every competency will be of equal importance for you. Try to determine: ***Which competencies are especially important now and over the next year?***

There are 50 competencies. Don’t be overwhelmed by the number. You already bring knowledge and skills to teaching and forming the faith of young people. No one is expected to be “well developed” in every competency. You don’t need to learn everything at once, which is why it’s important to keep a focus on the age group you are teaching and what is required to be effective with them.

The competencies are organized into three categories. You will see the movement from ***Who you are becoming as a catechist/educator? (Being) to How do I teach and form faith? (Doing) to What do I need to know and teach? (Knowing).***

1. The Catechist and Educator as Disciple and Witness (*Being*)
2. The Catechist and Educator as Evangelizer, Accompanier, and Educator (*Doing*)
3. The Catechist and Educator as Teacher (*Knowing*)

To determine your current level of proficiency (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) in each competency use the scale from 1 (beginning) to 4 (well developed).

- 1 = **Beginner**: I have some familiarity with this competency and just beginning to practice it.
- 2 = **Developing**: I am growing in my understanding and practice of this competency and beginning to demonstrate competency.
- 3 = **Competent and Capable**: I have developed a solid understanding and practice of this competency and demonstrate competency in practicing it.
- 4 = **Well Developed**: I have demonstrated a high level of mastery in understanding and practicing this competency.

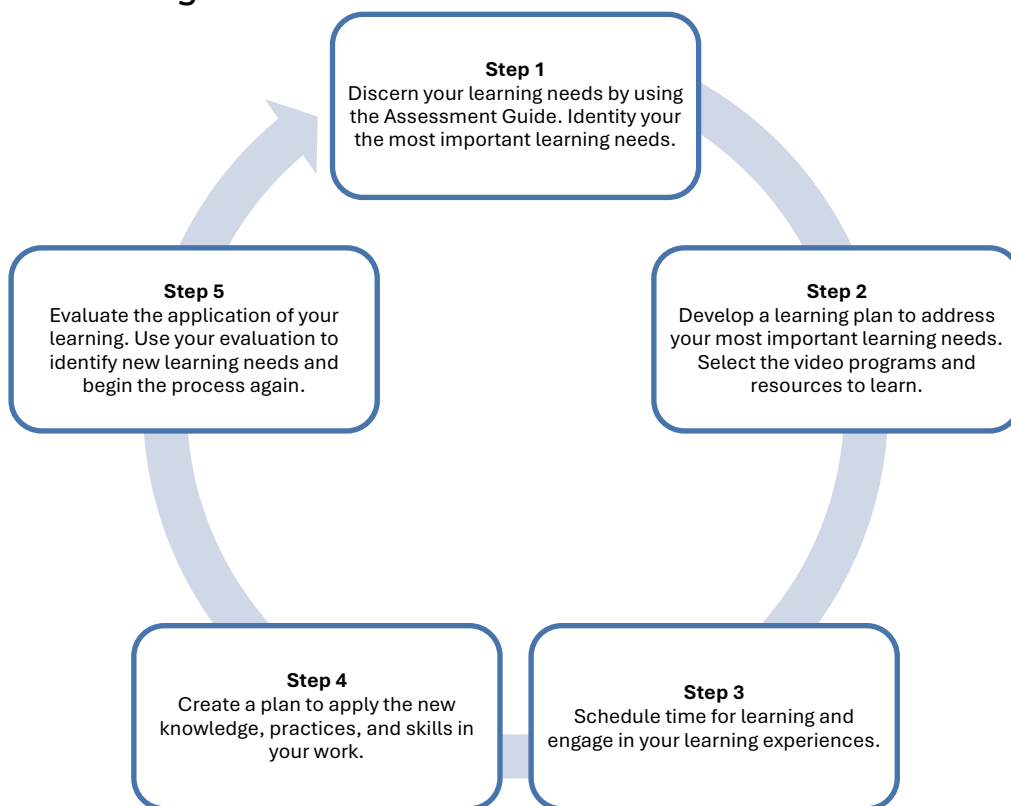
As you review each competency try to determine if this competency is important to you now and over the course of the year. Consider the audience and program content that you will be teaching. Ask yourself:

What are the most important competencies you need to develop to become more competent and capable teaching your audience and the program's content?

Circle the number of those competencies as you review the entire list. These are the competencies that you need to focus on first.

The Assessment Guide is designed for reflection, discernment, and continuing learning. Return to this assessment regularly to reflect on your growth and progress, and identify new areas for development.

Creating a Learning Plan



Step 1. Discern your learning needs by using the competencies in the Assessment Guide. Then, identify the most important learning needs to address.

To determine your current level of proficiency (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) in each competency use the scale from 1 (beginning) to 4 (well developed).

1 = **Beginner:** I have some familiarity with this competency and just beginning to practice it.

2 = **Developing:** I am growing in my understanding and practice of this competency and beginning to demonstrate competency.

3 = **Competent and Capable:** I have developed a solid understanding and practice of this competency and demonstrate competency in practicing it.

4 = **Well Developed:** I have demonstrated a high level of mastery in understanding and practicing this competency.

Step 2. Develop a learning plan to address your most important learning needs. Review the list of *Accompaniment in Faith* Video programs and find ones that connect to your learning needs. Check out the resource links online at www.ncclcatholic.org/accompaniment for additional resources (books, articles, videos, podcasts). And don't forget the people in your community who can help you with your learning plan.

Step 3. Schedule time for learning and engage in the learning activities in your learning plan.

Step 4. Create application strategies for incorporating the new knowledge, practices, skills, and methods in teaching and faith formation. Be specific.

Step 5. Evaluate the application of your learning in your practice of teaching and faith formation. Use your evaluation and the Assessment Guide to identify new learning needs and begin the process again.

Here is a simple format that you can use and/or adapt to create your learning plan.

What to Learn	How to Learn (Plan)	When to Learn	How to Apply	What You Learned
<i>What competency do you want to develop?</i>	<i>What video(s) will you watch? What other resources will you use?</i>	<i>When will you schedule time for learning?</i>	<i>How will you apply what you are learning?</i>	<i>How will you evaluate and identify new needs?</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				

Developing Competencies for Teaching and Forming Faith

A Guide for Parish Catechists & School Educators

This Assessment Guide is intended as guide to help you identify your strengths as a parish catechist or school educator and identify areas for learning and growth.

As you complete this Assessment Guide keep in mind the work you are doing as a parish catechist and school educator. Keep your focus on the children or adolescents you are working with and consider the knowledge, skills, and practices that are required to effectively teach and nurture the faith of your group. Not every competency will be of equal importance for you. Try to determine: **Which competencies are especially important now and over the next year?**

There are 50 competencies. Don't be overwhelmed by the number. You already bring knowledge and skills to teaching and forming the faith of young people. No one is expected to be "well developed" in every competency. You don't need to learn everything at once, which is why it's important to keep a focus on the age group you are teaching and what is required to be effective with them.

Using the Assessment Guide

The competencies are organized into three categories. You will see the movement from **Who you are becoming as a catechist/educator? (Being)** to **How do I teach and form faith? (Doing)** to **What do I need to know and teach? (Knowing)**.

1. The Catechist and Educator as Disciple and Witness (*Being*)
2. The Catechist and Educator as Evangelizer, Accompanier, and Educator (*Doing*)
3. The Catechist and Educator as Teacher (*Knowing*)

To determine your current level of proficiency (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) in each competency use the scale from 1 (beginning) to 4 (well developed).

- 1 = **Beginner**: I have some familiarity with this competency and just beginning to practice it.
- 2 = **Developing**: I am growing in my understanding and practice of this competency and beginning to demonstrate competency.
- 3 = **Competent and Capable**: I have developed a solid understanding and practice of this competency and demonstrate competency in practicing it.
- 4 = **Well Developed**: I have demonstrated a high level of mastery in understanding and practicing this competency.

As you review each competency try to determine if this competency is important to you now and over the course of the year. Consider the audience and program content that you will be teaching. Ask yourself:

What are the most important competencies you need to develop to become more competent and capable teaching your audience and the program's content?

Circle the number of those competencies as you review the whole list. These are the competencies that you need to focus on first.

The Assessment Guide is designed for reflection, discernment, and continuing learning. Return to this assessment regularly to reflect on your growth and identify new areas for development.

Developing a Personal Learning Plan

Step 1. Discern your learning needs by using the competencies in the Assessment Guide. Then, identify the most important learning needs to address.

To determine your current level of proficiency (knowledge, skill, and/or practice) in each competency use the scale from 1 (beginning) to 4 (well developed).

- 1 = **Beginner:** I have some familiarity with this competency and just beginning to practice it.
- 2 = **Developing:** I am growing in my understanding and practice of this competency and beginning to demonstrate competency.
- 3 = **Competent and Capable:** I have developed a solid understanding and practice of this competency and demonstrate competency in practicing it.
- 4 = **Well Developed:** I have demonstrated a high level of mastery in understanding and practicing this competency.

Step 2. Develop a learning plan to address your most important learning needs. Review the list of *Accompaniment in Faith* Video programs and find ones that connect to your learning needs. Check out the resource links online at www.ncclcatholic.org/accompaniment for additional resources (books, articles, videos, podcasts). And don't forget the people in your community who can help you with your learning plan.

Step 3. Schedule time for learning and engage in the learning activities in your learning plan.

Step 4. Create application strategies for incorporating the new knowledge, practices, skills, and methods in teaching and faith formation. Be specific.

Step 5. Evaluate the application of your learning in your practice of teaching and faith formation. Use your evaluation and the Assessment Guide to identify new learning needs and begin the process again.

Here is a simple format that you can use and/or adapt to create your learning plan.

What to Learn	How to Learn (Plan)	When to Learn	How to Apply	What You Learned
<i>What competency do you want to develop?</i>	<i>What video(s) will you watch? What other resources will you use?</i>	<i>When will you schedule time for learning?</i>	<i>How will you apply what you are learning?</i>	<i>How will you evaluate and identify new needs?</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				

Catechist & Educator Assessment Guide

These competencies were developed, in part, from the 2005 U.S. *National Directory for Catechesis* (55D and E) and the 2020 *Directory for Catechesis* (Vatican).

1. Disciple and Witness (*Being*)

Competency Statement SCALE 1=Beginner 2=Developing 3=Competent and Capable 4=Well Developed	Level of Proficiency			
1. I possess a sense of being called by God to serve as a catechist or educator.	1	2	3	4
2. I am growing in a relationship with Jesus Christ and what it means to live as a disciple in daily life.	1	2	3	4
3. I am a witness to the Gospel and proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ boldly and enthusiastically.	1	2	3	4
4. I share my faith journey through appropriate personal stories that illustrate God's continuing presence and work in my life.	1	2	3	4
5. I am committed to helping people grow in their love for God and develop a deeper relationship with God.	1	2	3	4
6. I have the ability and confidence to speak with conviction about my Catholic faith.	1	2	3	4
7. I study and read the Bible and apply its message to my life as a Christian.	1	2	3	4
8. I am growing in the knowledge of the Church teachings about what Catholics believe and why.	1	2	3	4
9. I have an active prayer life with daily prayer, and work to integrate Catholic spiritual practices into my spiritual life.	1	2	3	4
10. I participate in the sacramental life of the Church and bear witness to the significance of the Eucharist in my life.	1	2	3	4

2. Evangelizer, Accompanier, and Educator (*Doing*)

Competency Statement SCALE 1=Beginner 2=Developing 3=Competent and Capable 4=Well Developed	Level of Proficiency			
11. I understand the catechetical vision of the Catholic Church as expressed in the <i>Directory for Catechesis</i> .	1	2	3	4
12. I understand that catechesis and forming faith is part of the Church's mission of evangelization and helps learners encounter Jesus Christ and grow as missionary disciples.	1	2	3	4
13. I recognize and support the essential role of parents and families in faith formation and work in partnership with them.	1	2	3	4
14. I understand the developmental life tasks and spiritual and religious needs of the age group I am working with, and how this understanding guides teaching and forming faith with this age group.	1	2	3	4

15. I understand the religious traditions, values, and spiritualities of the ethnic cultures of the people I teach.	1	2	3	4
16. I design and teach inclusive learning experiences that respect the learner's dignity, ethnic cultures, and learning abilities and needs.	1	2	3	4
17. I understand and utilize the latest research on the principles and methods for learning today and how they can be applied to the age group I teach.	1	2	3	4
18. I understand the concept of learning styles and multiple intelligences, and I am able to apply these concepts to designing and teaching learning programs.	1	2	3	4
19. I have the ability to create safe and comfortable learning environments and build community among the learners.	1	2	3	4
20. I have the ability to listen well and effectively communicate with the learners.	1	2	3	4
21. I have the ability to use a variety of methods and learning activities for educating and forming my age group in the Catholic faith in ways that are appropriate to their age and intellectual development.	1	2	3	4
22. I have the ability to facilitate small group activities and discussion.	1	2	3	4
23. I have the ability to create opportunities for learners to ask questions, express doubts, and connect the Catholic faith to their questions and lived experience.	1	2	3	4
24. I have the ability to use digital media and technology appropriately, creatively, critically, and safely in teaching and faith formation.	1	2	3	4
25. I have the ability to prepare and lead prayer with my age group.	1	2	3	4
26. I have the ability to prepare my age group for participation in Sunday Mass.	1	2	3	4
27. I have the ability to prepare my age group for participating in the Liturgical Year.	1	2	3	4
28. I have the ability to help learners develop the habit of spiritual reflection so they can recognize discern, and respond to the Holy Spirit's guidance in their lives				
29. I understand and follow diocesan and parish/school policies for safeguarding children and vulnerable persons and maintaining appropriate boundaries.	1	2	3	4

3. Teacher of the Faith (*Knowing*)

Understanding the foundational themes of the Catholic faith as presented in the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church and how to teach them with a particular age group

Competency Statement	Level of Proficiency
SCALE 1=Beginner 2=Developing 3=Competent and Capable 4=Well Developed	

The Bible

30. I understand the Bible as one unified story with a variety of literary styles inspired by God.	1	2	3	4
31. I understand the major themes, events, and people of the Old Testament how to read the Old Testament using a Catholic approach to Scripture.	1	2	3	4
32. I understand the major themes, events, and people of the Gospels how to read the Old Testament using a Catholic approach to Scripture.	1	2	3	4
33. I have the ability to teach the Bible and incorporate the Bible in classes, programs, prayer experiences, and more.	1	2	3	4

Jesus Christ

34. I understand the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as presented in the Gospels.	1	2	3	4
35. I have the ability to communicate the essential Gospel message (the Good News) in ways that are understandable, meaningful, and appropriate for the age and experience of my group.	1	2	3	4
36. I have the ability to teach the life of Jesus – message, ministry, death and resurrection – in classes, programs, prayer experiences, and more	1	2	3	4

The Creed

37. I understand what the Creed teaches us about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church.	1	2	3	4
38. I have the ability to express what I believe about God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, and Church; and how that is informed by the Creed.	1	2	3	4
39. I have the ability to teach the Creed in classes, programs, prayer experiences, and more.	1	2	3	4

Sacraments

40. I understand the theology, symbols, and ritual actions of the seven sacraments.	1	2	3	4
41. I understand the structure, meaning, symbols, rituals actions, and theology of the Eucharist (Mass), especially the real presence of Christ at Mass.	1	2	3	4
42. I have the ability to teach the seven sacraments, and prepare my age group to participate in the celebration of the sacraments.	1	2	3	4

Morality

43. I understand the meaning of the Ten Commandments for moral living as a Catholic.	1	2	3	4
44. I understand Jesus' moral vision as it is presented in the four Gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount	1	2	3	4
45. I have the ability to teach the Catholic moral vision, principles, and decision-making In classes, programs, and more.	1	2	3	4
46. I understand the major themes of Catholic social teaching as found in Scripture and Church teaching, especially Papal teaching.	1	2	3	4
47. I have the ability to engage an age group in learning about the major themes of Catholic social teaching, analyzing today's social issues, applying Catholic social teaching, and developing action strategies for addressing the issues	1	2	3	4

Prayer

48. I understand the nature and meaning of Catholic prayer, especially the meaning of the Lord's Prayer in the Catholic life.	1	2	3	4
49. I understand the meaning of the essential Catholic prayer practices of adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, praise, and praying with Scripture; and I have the ability to lead age appropriate experiences using these prayer practices.	1	2	3	4
50. I have the ability to teach my age group how to pray, and develop a personal prayer life.	1	2	3	4

Accompaniment in Faith Video Programs

Competencies Correlated to the Video Programs

Series 1 Videos Correlated to Competencies

Called to be a Catechist – A Reflection on the Three Roles of the Catechist (1 video)

Teaching Practices and Skills	Competencies
1. Planning and Preparation for Teaching – presented by Dr. Joe Paprocki	#17
2. Creating the Right Climate for Learning – presented by Dr. Joe Paprocki	#19
3. Designing for Different Styles of Learning – presented by Dr. Joe Paprocki	#17, #18
4. Engaging Children in the Learning Experience – presented by Dr. Joe Paprocki	#17, #21
5. Building Relationships and Community – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #20
Creative Learning Methods (8 Individual Videos)	
1. Launching the Learning – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22
2. Art of Questioning – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
3. Collaborative Learning – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
4. Inquiry Based Learning – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
5. Nurturing Wonder – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
6. Engaging the Symbols of Faith – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
7. Teaching with Images – presented by Mariette Martineau	#19, #21, #22, #23
8. Closing Learning Well – presented by Mariette Martineau	#21, #22
Forming Faith	
1. Sharing Bible Stories with Children – presented by Kelly Henderschedt	#33
2. Sharing Bible Stories with Teens – presented by Kelly Henderschedt	#33
3. Praying with Children – presented by Jane Angha and Mariette Martineau	#25, #49, #50
4. Preparing for Worship – Four Movements of the Mass – presented by JohnMichael Reyes	#26
5. Preparing for Worship: Signs, Symbols, and Gestures – presented by JohnMichael Reyes	#26
6. Preparing for the Liturgical Year – presented by JohnMichael Reyes	#27