

*Nine Tips for First Time
Catechists*

So, after thought and prayer, or maybe a phone call from a Director of Religious Education in need, you have decided to give of yourself and your time by teaching a religious education class for the upcoming year. You're probably feeling something between nervous and excited. Don't worry, you're in for a great experience! Here are some tips to get you started as a new catechist.



Understand Expectations

1 Make sure you understand the structure of Religious Education program at your parish. How do classes begin? Is there a large group prayer service? Do students go directly to their classroom? At what time should you arrive? Make sure to attend all catechist training sessions offered by the parish. Your participation will help set you up for a successful year!

Be a Bookworm

3 If your parish's program uses a text, make sure you familiarize yourself with its content and structure long before the first week of class. Rely on the program's catechist guide to help you navigate through the program. Outline your expectations and goals for your students understanding. With a clear picture of where your journey with your class ends, you will be better able to figure out what is most important to highlight along the way.



Use your Resources

4 Check out all of the resources your textbook company offers. In addition to your program's print and digital resources, supplement your classroom teaching with online resources such as downloadable worksheets, activity ideas, and prayer services. And blogs and social media sites can inform and inspire your planning and teaching as well as connect you with other catechists.



Seek Counsel

2 Connect with individuals who have taught in the parish's program before. Seek their advice and learn from their experiences. You'll feel more comfortable on your first day of class if you know what to expect from more seasoned catechists.

Sadlier Religion Resources for New Catechists

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

facebook.com/sadlierreligion
pinterest.com/sadlierreligion
youtube.com/sadlierreligion

BLOGS

webelieveandshare.com
sadlierwebelieveblog.com



Get Planning!

5 Weekly classes come quickly, so make time to plan ahead. Write out your lesson plans. Walking in and expecting to teach on the fly will only make you and your students anxious. Review in detail which activities you will use, and prepare and rehearse any prayers.



Be Flexible

6 Despite detailed planning, do leave room for flexibility. Kids will be kids, and many times Religious Education classes take place after students have already spent a long day in school. Make sure you are comfortable and open to rolling with the punches, for example, moving activities around or taking lessons outside.



Know Your Class Rules

7 Consider any parish policies to communicate to students, and give advance thought to what the procedures and rules for your classroom will be. It is too difficult to decide on these as you go along. Make sure to be flexible and realistic. Be firm, but fair, and make your expectations clear to students from the first class.



Pray About It!

8 Obtain a student list before class begins and spend time praying for them individually, by name. Also, keep an active prayer life throughout the time you're teaching. Remember, you can't give what you don't have! Ask God how to best teach the students in front of you, and you will do wonderfully!



Be Yourself!

9 God has called you to this ministry! He has a plan for you, and needs your specific gifts and talents in this classroom at this time, so be confident! Go forward knowing that God is with you. As Saint Catherine of Sienna said, "Be who you were meant to be, and you will set the world on fire!"



