

DOING: The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Catechists

1. Who was one of the best teachers you ever had? What made him or her such an effective teacher?

2. Of this teacher's qualities and skills, which do you think you already possess?

3. Of this teacher's qualities and skills, which would you most like to improve on?

You may be familiar with Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (if not, I highly recommend it!). Well, today let's focus on seven habits of highly effective catechists. I firmly believe that the most effective catechists excel in the following areas:

- 1. A Passion for Their Own Ongoing Formation:** they never stop learning about and growing in their faith.
- 2. Planning and Preparation:** they prepare their lessons thoroughly and prayerfully.
- 3. Creating a Prayerful Environment:** they create a learning space that is conducive to faith formation and prayer.
- 4. Using a Variety of Engaging Activities:** they know how to make their learners active, not passive.
- 5. Maintaining Discipline:** they know how to keep order.
- 6. Leading Reflective Prayer:** they not only include prayer in their lessons but create a climate of prayer that pervades their lessons.
- 7. Positive Presence (Teaching with Authority):** they utilize skills that command attention and encourage participation.

(Based on *The Catechist's Toolbox: How To Thrive as a Religious Education Teacher*, by Joe Paprocki. For more information, visit www.loyolapress.com/toolbox.)

DOING: Entering through Their Door but Leaving through Your Door

“What’s Hot? What’s Not?”

With the other members of your group, brainstorm a list of “what’s hot” right now in the lives of those you teach. Think of movies, video games, celebrities, athletes, games, fads, songs, TV shows, Internet sites, and so on.



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Now, select one item from the list on the previous page and brainstorm a way that this could in some way connect with an aspect of the Catholic faith (i.e., you could refer to this item in class to grab attention and use it as a segue into teaching an aspect of our faith). Describe:



Follow a Catechetical Process

Think of your lesson as a movement: you want to move your learners from where they are to where Jesus wants them to be. This movement, called the *catechetical process*, involves four steps:

- 1. Engaging** the life experience of the participants
- 2. Exploring** the concepts to be taught (Scripture and Tradition)
- 3. Reflecting** and integrating the concepts with the lived experience
- 4. Responding** with a new way of living

Simply put, you take learners from where they are and move them toward Jesus. St. Ignatius of Loyola described this as “entering through their door but leaving through your door.”