

## Catechist Instructional Techniques

### Growing in Knowledge of Christ within Community

#### Preparation

1. What I know about \_\_\_\_\_, Questions I have about \_\_\_\_\_

*Have participants bring journals to OCIA sessions and begin the session by asking them to complete the prompt above. This activity uncovers prior knowledge, preconceptions, and misconceptions that will need to be addressed in your session's Explanation, along with individuals' relevant questions. Beginning sessions in this way fosters engagement and makes discussion a norm for growing in the faith.*

2. Struggle first, explanation to follow

*The "struggle first" activity is useful tool that can precede a proclamation and prime individuals for the good news. Beginning sessions with a small group discussion centered around a difficult question such as, "If God is all good, how can He allow the presence of evil in the world?" or "What is the meaning of life?" Have them identify one point from their discussion or a pointed question from their discussion to share out with the large group.*

3. Small group discussion with a share-out to the large group

*After participants engage in a small group discussion, have them pick one point from their discussion to share out with the large group. Refrain from analyzing their responses prior to the proclamation and explanation. After individuals circle back in the reflection activity "I used to think... now I think..." then provide any other necessary clarity to definitely declare Catholic teaching.*

4. "See... think... wonder..."<sup>1</sup>

*A helpful tool that leads smoothly into a proclamation. Begin with a catechetical example of Sacred Art from Echoing the Mystery and ask participants the following three questions in order, 1) what do you observe in this picture? 2) what do you think these symbols teach us about the faith, and 3) what does this lead you to wonder about?*

5. Instructional Talk moves

*See accompanying handout for Instructional Talk Moves that help you guide an engaging discussion.*

---

<sup>1</sup> [pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder](http://pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder)

## Proclamation

*Liturgy of the Word with kerygmatic Homily or reflection sharing the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church.*

## Explanation

1. Reflection: “I used to think... now I think...”<sup>2</sup>

*Finish an explanation section of your session with the above journal prompt. Have participants share one thing they wrote or another question that arose in a small group. Share out with the larger group and enjoy answering the new questions.*

2. “Favorite mistake”

*Use the “Common Errors” section in Echoing the Mystery and have participants choose their “favorite mistake” and why they found it interesting in a small group discussion. Have them share out one insight from their discussion with the large group.*

3. What is happening in this picture?

*Use the Sacred Art included in the topic to check for understanding. Have the group observe the painting, mosaic, sculpture, etc. and explain what is happening. This activity helps participants make connections and expose any remaining misconceptions.*

4. Instructional Talk moves

*See accompanying handout for Instructional Talk Moves that help you guide an engaging discussion*

5. Muddiest Point

*Display the session’s knowledge targets and ask participants to identify which of them is their muddiest point. Have participants form a question and ask out in the larger group. Participants grow by hearing each other’s questions.*

---

<sup>2</sup> [pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think](http://pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think)

## Application

*Refer to baptismal promises*

1. *What do I renounce as a response to today's good news?*  
➤ *Obedience of faith – simple action*
2. *What do I practice as a response to today's good news?*  
➤ *Primacy of grace – open myself to God's work and respond to His inspirations?*
3. *Praise and adoration*  
*Thank God for the gift of Salvation and contemplate His goodness*

## Celebration

*Love of God and love of neighbor*

Practices:

- *Point out where this doctrine is in the Mass and how to participate with mind and heart (SC 11).*
- *Provide meditations – use the imagination to develop relationships with God and the Saints*
- *Works of mercy that relieve the suffering of those around participants (Mat 25:31-46)*