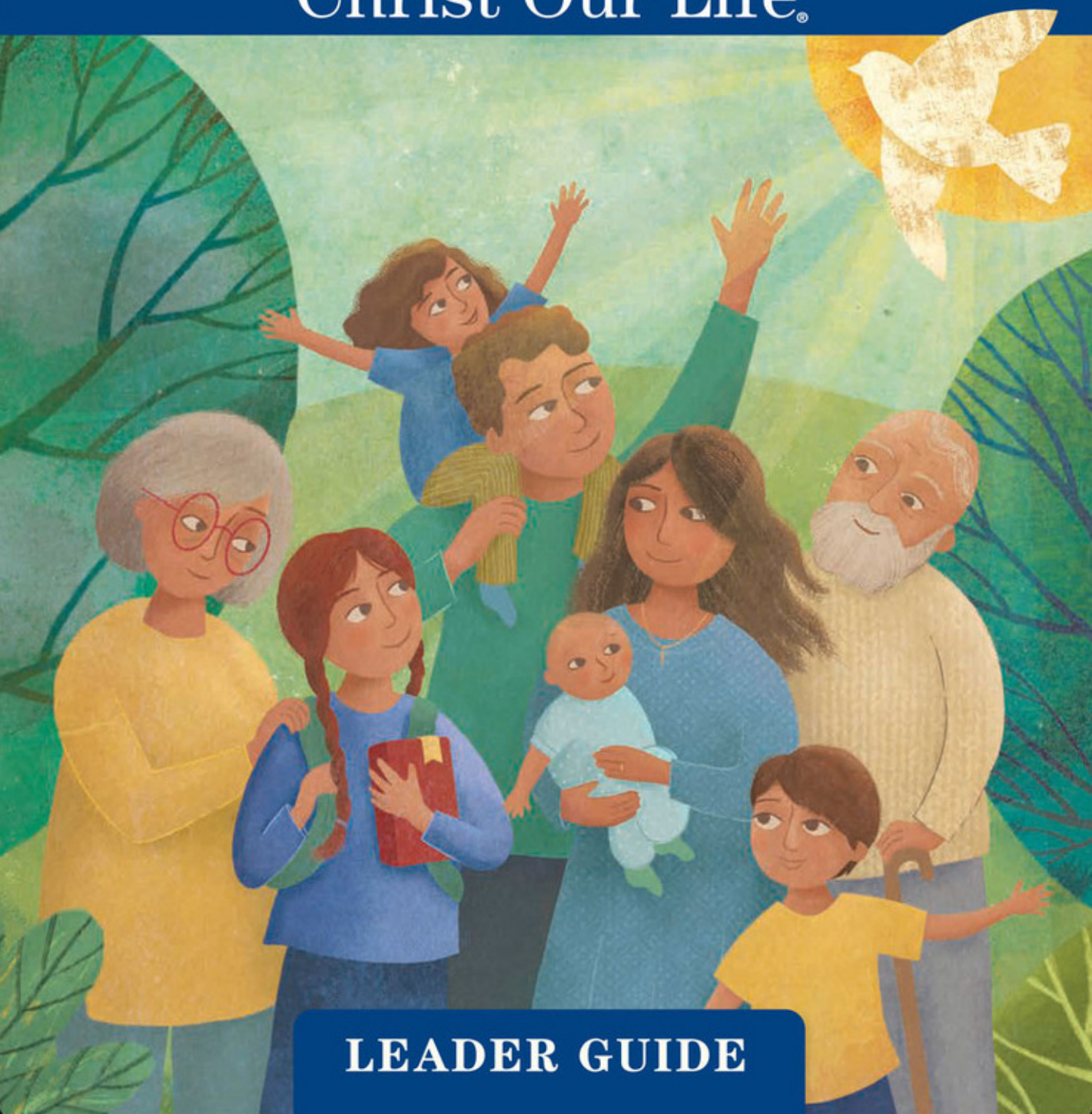


# Family Catechesis

Christ Our Life<sup>®</sup>



**LEADER GUIDE**

Christ Our Life<sup>®</sup>

# Family Catechesis

Leader Guide

LOYOLAPRESS.  
A JESUIT MINISTRY

***Christ Our Life Family Catechesis Leader Guide*** is an expression of the work of Loyola Press, a ministry of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

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Acknowledgments continue on page 209.

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***Christ Our Life*  
Family Catechesis  
Developed by  
Joe Paprocki**

The *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program was developed by best-selling author, catechetical leader, and religious educator Joe Paprocki, D.Min. He is the author of more than two dozen best-selling books on faith formation and catechist training.

*The family proclaims the Gospel. As a domestic church founded on the sacrament of matrimony that also has a missionary dimension, the Christian family takes part in the Church's mission of evangelization and is therefore an agent of catechesis.*

*Directory for Catechesis, #231*

## Welcome!

Thank you for choosing the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program. As a catechetical leader, you are aware that catechesis is a lifelong journey for the whole parish. This practical, flexible, simple, and ready-to-implement program provides you with the tools and support you need to put a comprehensive family catechesis program into effect.

### ***Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis**

The *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program is a complete faith formation curriculum that gives busy families the flexibility they need and the deeper relationship with God they desire.

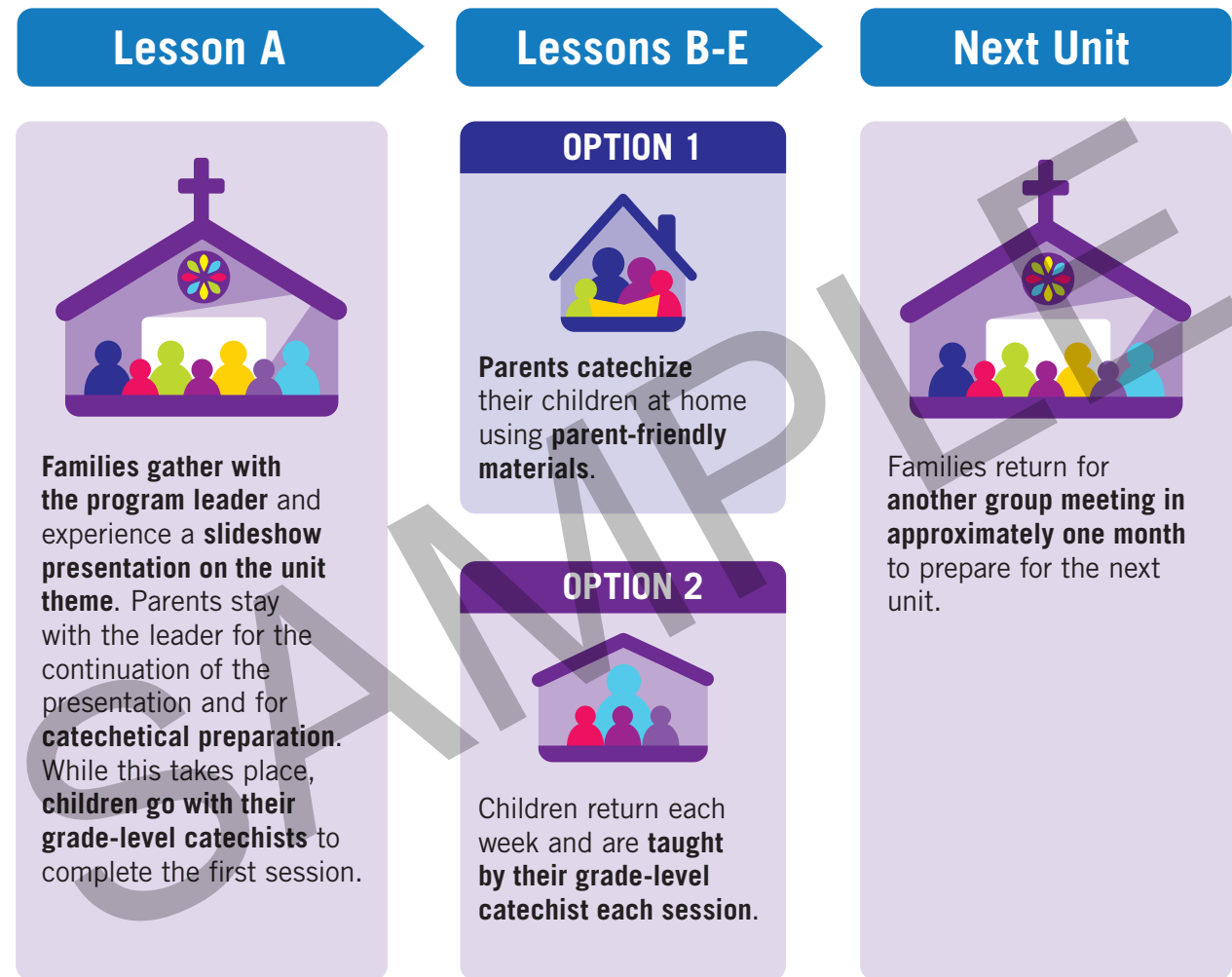
### **A Flexible Approach**

Guided by a parish catechetical leader, parents and their children regularly come together with other families to take part in group meetings that serve as springboards to each unit's content. Through these meetings, parents become more confident, comfortable, and able to share the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith with their children. In their homes, families explore the unit theme at their own pace, supported by the engaging print and digital materials the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program offers. Alternatively, the remaining sessions can be taught in the parish by grade-level catechists with families returning for another group meeting in approximately one month to prepare for the next part. Use the approach that best serves the needs of your parish families and your resources and priorities.

### ***Strengthening the Parish Community and the Domestic Church***

# A Program Model with Options

Family catechesis guided by trained catechists!



*Christ Our Life* is a K–8 faith formation program approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

# What You Need

The *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program materials are digitally accessed after purchase.

## For Leaders and Directors

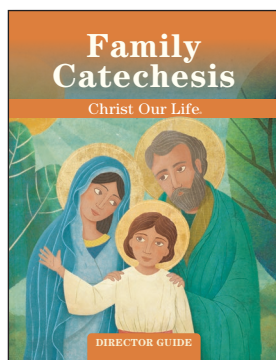
### Used During the Group Meeting

High-quality, complete slideshow presentations give a positive visual impact to your group meetings and ensure successful presentations to diverse groups. Each slideshow presentation includes multimedia (internet access required) and presentation notes so you can capture and maintain participants' attention and engagement.

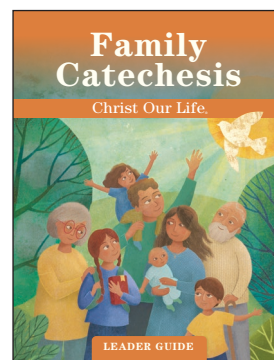


### Family Catechesis Slideshow Presentations:

Used to open each meeting; viewed by families and parents  
*Digitally delivered*



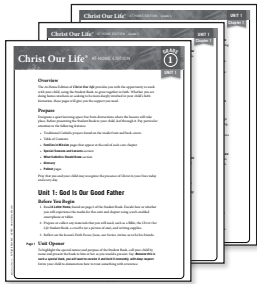
**Family Catechesis Director Guide:**  
Program setup and management  
*Digitally delivered*



**Family Catechesis Leader Guide:**  
Presentation guide for slideshows with helpful tips and full scripting  
*Digitally delivered*

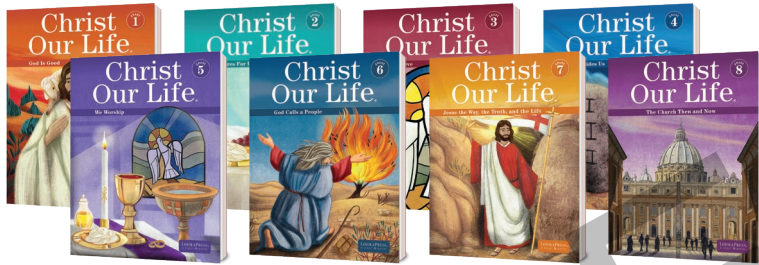


## For Parents and Children



### At-Home Editions:

Used at home for the vast majority of the year, these step-by-step instructions help parents lead their children through the Student Book. *Grades 1–8, downloadable printable PDFs accessible at [christourlife.com](http://christourlife.com).*



**Student Books:** Grades 1–8, Printed



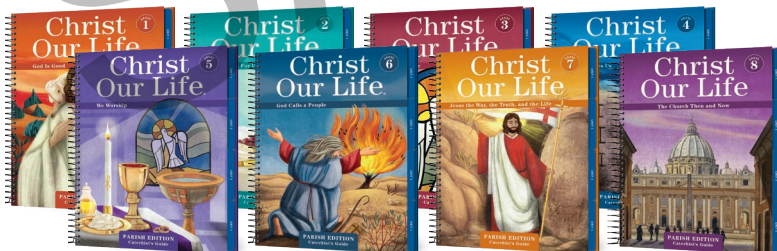
### Digital Reviews:

- *Interactive Chapter Reviews* assessment tool with results-sharing option that allows parents to generate progress reports
- Review Game

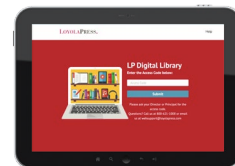
*Accessible at [christourlife.com](http://christourlife.com)*

## For Catechists

Used While Parents are in Monthly Lesson with Leader



**Parish Catechist's Guides:** Grades 1–8, Printed



### Digital Resources:

Videos, audio, interactives, instructional support, additional activities, and assessments can be found on the **LP Digital Library**.



## Slideshow Themes

The *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program is designed to be taught in a four-year cycle based on a spiral curriculum. Enduring topics are the touchstone of the program and are explored in new and exciting ways each year. **The themes for each year align with the *Christ Our Life* chapters. There is a slideshow for every theme for a total of 28 unique presentations.**

### Four-Year Cycle

This chart outlines the part themes for each year in the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis four-year cycle. In addition, two informative slideshows are provided to get the program started.

PART TOPIC	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
<b>Part 1: The Creed</b>	In Search of the Truth: God Reveals Himself to Us	The Relational God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	Whom Can I Turn To?: Jesus—Fully Human, Fully Divine	No One Is an Island: Church—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
<b>Part 2: The Sacraments</b>	What Sustains Me? The Mass and the Eucharist	Leading a Heroic Life: Sacraments of Initiation	When Life Hurts: Sacraments of Healing	How to Give Your Life to Others: Sacraments at the Service of Communion
<b>Part 3: Moral Life</b>	The Moral Life: Stop Trying to Fix Yourself	How Do I Know Right from Wrong?: Conscience and Commandments	Good Habits: Virtues and Beatitudes	Hope for a Damaged World: Charity and Justice
<b>Part 4: Prayer</b>	Filling the Empty Space Within: Prayer and Spirituality	A Life of True Happiness: Jesus' Teachings	Who's Got Your Back?: Mary and the Saints	A Power Greater Than Yourself: Praying for Miracles
<b>Part 5: Missionary Discipleship</b>	Discovering What You Want Out of Life: God's Invitation and Our Response	Why Am I Here?: The Mission of the Church	Does My Faith Make a Difference? Catholic Identity	Where Is God When It Hurts?: The Paschal Mystery
<b>The Year in Our Church: Advent and Christmas</b>	Whom Can I Count On?: God's Promise—The Covenant	There's Got to Be Another Way: The Coming of the Kingdom	The World the Way It Should Be: Prophets and Social Justice	Where Can I Find God?: The Incarnation
<b>The Year in Our Church: Lent, Holy Week, and Easter</b>	The Year in Our Church: Lent, Holy Week, and Easter	The Key to Happiness: Selfless Love, the Passion of Jesus	How Do I Change Bad Habits?: Conversion and Repentance	Finding Hope in the Middle of Despair: The Triduum

# More About the Slideshow Presentations

High-quality, complete slideshow presentations across four years of instruction give a positive visual impact to your group meetings and ensure successful presentations to diverse groups. Each slideshow presentation includes multimedia (internet access required) and presentation notes so you can capture and maintain participants' attention and engagement.

## Five Part-Theme Slideshow Presentations per Year (20 Presentations Across 4 Years)

Each presentation engages parents and their children through group prayer, discussion and sharing activities, Scripture readings, and multimedia.

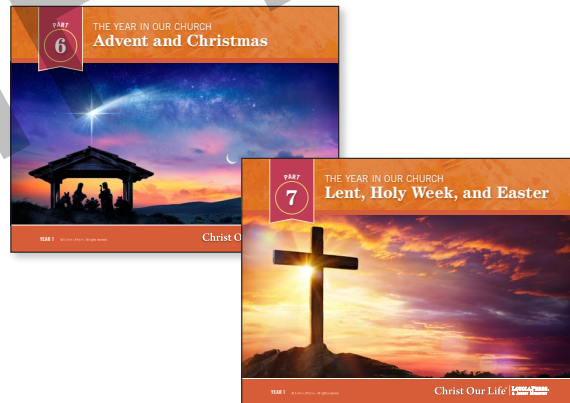
- 1 The Creed
- 2 The Sacraments
- 3 Moral Life
- 4 Prayer
- 5 Missionary Discipleship



## Two Seasonal Slideshow Presentations per Year (8 Presentations Across 4 Years)

Your program can stay in tune with the seasons of the liturgical year with these slideshow presentations.

- 1 Advent and Christmas
- 2 Lent, Holy Week, and Easter



## Two Informative Slideshow Presentations

These two informative slideshow presentations will support parents as they begin the program with the families.

- 1 **Introduction** Use this slideshow presentation to orient yourself and parents to this easy-to-use and adaptable program.
- 2 **Online Resources** Use this slideshow presentation to explain to families how to access and use the web resources.

# Family Catechesis Group-Meeting Structure

Parents and their children begin the meeting together in community with other families. After a 15-minute Welcome section, children meet with their grade-level catechists and are guided through a chapter from the *Christ Our Life* Student Book. The remaining chapters are taught by parents or taught at weekly meetings with a grade-level catechist.

The chapters correspond to the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Visit [christourlife.com](http://christourlife.com) for a chart showing how the chapters can be grouped to follow this model. Suggestions for other models are offered in the Director Guide.

PARENTS + CHILDREN

## Welcome 15 minutes

- Group prayer
- Scripture
- Group prayer
- Brief sharing activity to preview the part theme

*Children leave for their respective grade-level meeting spaces.*

PARENTS ONLY

## Connect 30 minutes

- Parent-focused exploration of the part theme
- Small-group sharing activities and discussion
- Scripture
- Multimedia

## Close 15 minutes

- Wrap-up
- Closing prayer
- Information about the next meeting



## After the Group Meeting

*Parents complete their meeting 15 minutes before the end of the children's grade-level lesson. This allows time for questions, for conversations between parents, and for parents to pick up their children from their respective grade-level classes.*

# How to Use This Leader Guide

This resource provides step-by-step instructions for conducting the program's slideshow presentations. Each part begins with a catechist preparation page that sets the stage.

## Catechist Preparation Page

**Consistent format**

**Concise summary of the part's central faith concept**

**Invitation for the leader to pray, read Scripture, and reflect**

**Practical and achievable objectives**

**Complete list of resources needed for the presentation**

**Navigation slide cue on each page**

**Bible passages included in the slideshow presentation**

**Catholic social teaching theme emphasized in the part**

**Paragraphs of the Catechism of the Catholic Church covered**

**PART 1**  
**The Creed**

**Faith Focus:** *God, the author of the Bible, speaks to us through it.*

**Reflecting on the Faith Experience**  
Take a few moments to reflect prayerfully before preparing the meeting.

**Psalm 119:89-90,160**  
Your word, *Lord*, stands forever;  
it is firm as the heavens.  
Through all generations your truth endures;  
fixed to stand firm like the earth.  
Your every word is enduring;  
all your righteous judgments are forever.

**Question:** How familiar am I with the books of the Bible?

**Learning Outcomes**

- Discuss the Bible and what God reveals about himself to us in the Bible.
- Pray the Bible.
- Discuss the terms *New Testament*, *Old Testament*, *prophets*, and *revelation*.

**Materials**

- Bible
- Reflective music (optional)
- Grade 8 Visual Aid: Journey of the Church Through Time (optional)
- Recent parish bulletin (optional)

**Scripture in Part 1**  
2 Timothy 3:14-17

**Catholic Social Teaching in Part 1**  
**Solidarity:** Solidarity is the attitude that leads Christians to share spiritual and material goods. Solidarity unites rich and poor, weak and strong, and helps build a society that recognizes that we all live in an interdependent world.

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**  
The themes in this part are described in CCC 69, 96, 136, 138.

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www.christourlife.com      **1**      Christ Our Life Family Catechesis Leader Guide



## Icons Call Out Special Features



**Time**  
Estimate of how much time it will take to cover a given section of the meeting



**Prayer**  
Simple instructions for how to pray with the group



**Scripture**  
Options for reading and understanding God's Word



**FYI**  
Additional information and context



**Sharing**  
Suggestions for sparking meaningful discussion



**Multimedia**  
Instructions for accessing video, audio, and interactives for use during the presentation



**Tip**  
Ways to enhance the meeting



**CST**  
Catholic social teaching option pertaining to slide content

## Conduct Slideshow Presentation

The slides and accompanying scripting are designed to engage both children and their parents. Reduced images of each slide help synchronize the visual and spoken elements of the presentation. Special features appear in sidebars.

### Welcome (15 minutes)

The catechetical leader will introduce the theme through prayer, Scripture reading, and a sharing activity or discussion. Program- and parish-specific information will also be shared. After the Welcome section is concluded, your children will leave to join their grade-level catechists to complete the first chapter of the unit.

Signals the beginning of the Welcome section

**Visual element and essential text**

**Clear instructional support**

**Distinct, audience-specific scripting**

**Time**  
The Welcome section will be about 15 minutes.

**Say:** Welcome! Today we will focus on Part 1: The Creed. During this meeting, we will learn that God reveals himself to us through the story of salvation history told in Scripture. God is constantly inviting us into a relationship with him.

We will stay together for the first part of today's meeting; then the children will go with their catechists to complete the first chapter of Part 1.

**Explain:** Explain how your Family Catechesis program works and whether the remaining sessions can be taught at home by parents or in the parish by grade-level catechists.

www.christourlife.com 2 Christ Our Life Family Catechesis Leader Guide

### Connect (30 minutes)

A variety of parent-focused activities engage participants in the content and in fellowship with one another. Parents' understanding of essential faith concepts is bolstered, and they come away from the meeting more confident about passing on the treasure of the Catholic faith when teaching at home and in everyday life.

**Knowing the Bible**  
Two challenges we might encounter

1. Locating passages, characters, and stories
2. Understanding what we have read

**Say:** One of the primary sources of God's Revelation is the Bible. For many of us, reading and understanding the Bible can be intimidating. Even when reading the Bible in our own language, we may conclude, "It's like Greek to me."

When Catholics first experience Scripture, they often encounter two challenges:

1. Locating passages, characters, and stories
2. Understanding what they read

I know that you have some knowledge of the Bible. So, before we continue, we're going to break into small groups and list as many famous Bible characters as possible.

*Allow several minutes for the groups to brainstorm. Then invite them to share their lists.*

www.christourlife.com 9 Christ Our Life

Scripting for a parent-only audience

**Let's Review the Bible!**

**Time**  
The Connect section will be about 30 minutes.

**Interactive**  
Click anywhere on the slide to start the interactive or launch it from the LP Digital Library.

**Say:** Let's take a moment to review what we have learned about the Bible.

*Start the interactive game. For each question that appears, ask the group to raise their hands or stand to indicate if the book or story comes from the Old or New Testament. Then click the option in the interactive that has the most respondents.*

**Say:** You already know a lot about the Bible! However, no matter how much you think you know about the Bible, there is always more to learn. The more you learn about the Bible, the more you will discover how much God loves you and wants to reveal his love to you.

**Tip**  
Consider telling participants where they can purchase a Catholic Bible.

www.christourlife.com 21 Christ Our Life Family Catechesis Leader Guide

Signals the beginning of the Connect section

Embedded multimedia link

### Close (15 minutes)

The meeting concludes with a wrap-up, a closing prayer, and an opportunity for you to provide participants with information about the next meeting, parish events, or other housekeeping issues.

**SAY:** As we bring this meeting to a close, let's pray with Scripture using an ancient technique called *lectio divina*, which means "sacred reading." Let's begin by watching the following video that explains *lectio divina*.

*Play the video. Afterward, lead participants through an experience of lectio divina using a passage from the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday and the steps outlined in the video.*

**Time**  
The Close section will be about 15 minutes.

**Video**  
Click anywhere on the slide to play the video or launch it from the LP Digital Library.

www.christourlife.com 33 Christ Our Life Family Catechesis Leader Guide

Signals the beginning of the Close section

Concise summary of the part theme

## After the Group Meeting

The meeting ends 15 minutes before the end of the grade-level meetings. This allows time to answer questions and remind parents where to access the resources for at-home lessons and additional online support.

### Seasonal Gatherings

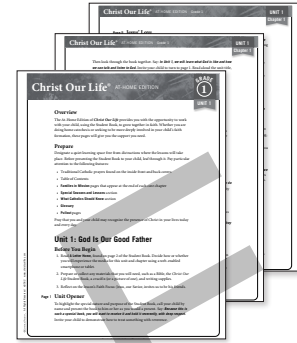
On some occasions, the Family Catechesis families and parishioners will have the opportunity to participate in seasonal events. These will take place in the parish after the Advent and Christmas; Lent, Holy Week, and Easter; and year-end group meetings. See pages 19–20 of the Director Guide for more information about the seasonal gatherings.

# Resources for At-Home Lessons

The *Christ Our Life* program includes online resources, ready to download and print, that are useful for adapting instruction to an at-home setting.

## At-Home Edition

After the monthly group meeting, parents will be better prepared to guide their children through the chapters in the Student Book. The *Christ Our Life* At-Home Edition provides grade-specific, step-by-step instructions to support parents. The At-Home Edition PDFs can be viewed online or printed.



## Interactive Chapter Reviews

The Interactive Chapter Reviews serve as an evaluation tool to help monitor children's progress.

## Study Guides

The Study Guides help children review the content of each chapter, including the important vocabulary words. The guides include the page number where each concept appears in the Student Book, so your children can find them if they need to review them more thoroughly.



# Additional Resources

Loyola Press provides a wealth of online resources to support and enhance the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program.

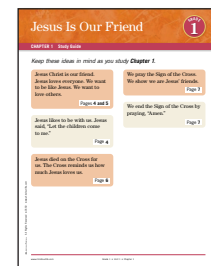
## LP Digital Library

- Seasonal resources
- Family resources in English and Spanish

## LoyolaPress.com

- **3-Minute Retreats:** Available in English and Spanish for your computer, smartphone, or tablet
- **Sunday Connection:** Useful background and activities to explain the upcoming Sunday's Scripture readings
- **Saint Resources:** Activities, biographies, reflections, and stories
- **Our Catholic Faith Resources:** Articles, activities, and facts about Catholic life

*Note: Be sure children are closely supervised by adults when on the internet.*





## A Catechetical Leader's Role

As a catechetical leader, you are responding to the call to share the gift of faith with others, even as you deepen your own faith. Know that this Leader Guide, together with the slideshow presentations, multimedia, and online resources, was designed to accompany you every step of the way with abundant resources, practical tips, and ample support.

### Fundamental Characteristics of Your Role

As we yearn for the knowledge and skills that help us gently nurture others to experience their faith, we ground our efforts in these fundamentals:

- a well-developed understanding of Catholic Tradition, culture, doctrine, and Scripture
- an ability to treat all children as made in the image of God and worthy of kindness, dignity, and respect
- effective organizational and communication skills
- valuing child safety as evidenced by meeting all diocesan and parish requirements—including training—and ensuring that the catechists with whom you work do likewise



### Qualities of an Effective Catechetical Leader

As a catechetical leader, you share your personal faith and humanity. The ability to share authentically requires certain qualities that include

- a desire to grow in your faith and relationship with God
- an awareness of God's grace and the desire to respond to that grace
- a commitment to the Church's liturgical and sacramental life and moral teachings
- a strength of character built on patience, responsibility, confidence, and creativity
- an understanding of the needs and concerns of the catechists, families, and children whom you serve
- a generosity of spirit, respect for diversity, and habit of hospitality and inclusion.

## Prepare a Welcoming Environment

When Jesus planned a special meal with his Apostles during Passover, he sent Peter and John ahead of him, saying, “Go and make preparations for us.” (Luke 22:8) In the same way, preparing the physical space for faith formation is important. Although you may not be able to choose your meeting space, you can take steps to make it welcoming.

No matter your environment, give families a sense of belonging where they can be comfortable learning and sharing. The best way to support and encourage any group is to have a welcoming spirit. Greet parents and children at the door as they arrive.

- Arrive 20–30 minutes early to prepare the space and to center yourself. If you are rushed and frantic, the participants will feel the same; likewise, if you are calm and relaxed, that tone will be reflected in the room.
- Arrange the chairs so that each has an unobstructed view of the screen on which the slideshow presentation will be projected.
- Place handouts, name tags, or other materials on a table near the entry. Using preprinted name tags will make it easy for you to see at a glance who is not present. Consider affixing the name tags to meeting materials so they can be retrieved by the participants later.
- If possible, make all aspects of your environment consistent from month to month. Parents and children will find comfort in returning to a familiar space.
- Consider providing light snacks and drinks, such as coffee and water, but be aware of any food allergies.

### Prayer Center

Arrange a focal point with symbols that express the presence of the Word of God and communicate a sense of the sacred. Set up a prayer center with these supplies:

- small table, prominently placed
- cloth table cover, changed to reflect each liturgical season
- Bible
- small plant or flowers
- one or more of the following: bowl of holy water, crucifix, religious image or statue
- battery-operated candle

