

Christ Our Life.®

Director Guide

LOYOLA PRESS.
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Christ Our Life.[®]
FAMILY CATECHESIS

Director Guide

SAMPLE

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Welcome

The family is a community of love and of life. . . . The future of persons and of the human and ecclesial communities depends to a large extent on the family, the basic cell of society. Thanks to the family, the Church becomes a family of families and is enriched with the life of these domestic churches.

Directory for Catechesis #226

Your Role as Catechetical Leader

Roles for catechetical leaders vary from parish to parish and from diocese to diocese. What is consistent is the challenge of providing guidance, support, and resources for all who take part in your parish's faith formation program. This is true when leading your parish's family catechesis program.

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis combines parish-based group meeting and grade-specific instruction led by trained catechists with at-home lessons guided by parents. You will lead, or designate someone to lead, monthly group meetings with accompanying slideshow presentations, recruit and mentor catechists to teach children in a grade-level group setting, and help parents teach their children additional faith content at home.

Family catechesis is a collaborative effort undertaken by the catechetical leader, parents, children, and catechists together with the wider parish community. Family catechesis strengthens the domestic church and the parish community. Preparation, planning, and communication will help your program be successful. May all you do help others recognize God's presence in all things! Blessings on your endeavor.

Using This Guide

This Director Guide provides you with the resources needed to implement the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program. This guide contains nine steps to assist you in this endeavor.

Step 1: Become Familiar with *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis

Step 1 explains the vision of the program, tells how it works in the parish and at home, and guides you through the program components.

Step 2: Plan for the Year

Step 2 explains the four-year cycle for the program and offers implementation models.

Step 3: Promote Family Catechesis in Your Parish

Step 3 offers strategies to promote the program and encourage parents.

Step 4: Plan a Communications Strategy

Step 4 describes ways to affirm, communicate with, and encourage catechists and parents as they collaborate throughout the program.

Step 5: Set Up a System

Step 5 provides simple ideas for program implementation, planning, organization, and creating welcoming and effective learning spaces.

Step 6: Train Catechists

Step 6 offers a suggested schedule and ideas for a catechist retreat.

Step 7: Introduce Parents to *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis

Step 7 provides ideas for a parent meeting to kick off the program and introduce its components, structure, and resources.

Step 8: Introduce Families to *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis

Step 8 inspires families to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in words and action, calling them to be missionary disciples.

Step 9: Resources for Success

Step 9 provides print and online resources, as well as reproducibles, to help you, catechists, and parents make family catechesis an enriching and exciting journey.

Step 1: Become Familiar with *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis

What You Need

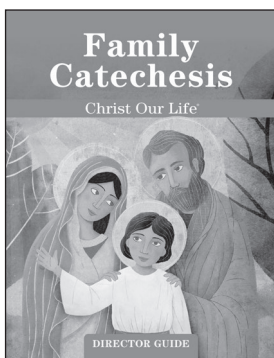
The *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program materials are digitally accessed after purchase.

For Leaders and Directors

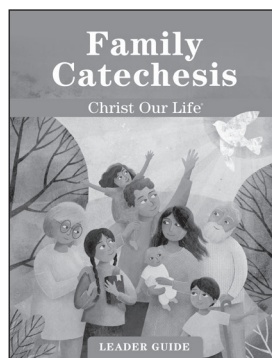
High-quality, complete slideshow presentations give a positive visual impact to your group meetings and ensure successful presentations to diverse groups. Each slideshow presentation includes multimedia (internet access required) and presentation notes so you can capture and maintain participants' attention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



Family Catechesis Slideshow Presentations:
Used to open each meeting;
viewed by families and parents only
Digitally delivered



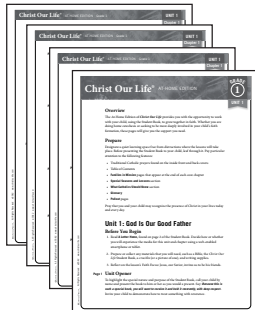
Family Catechesis Director Guide:
Program setup and management
Digitally delivered



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

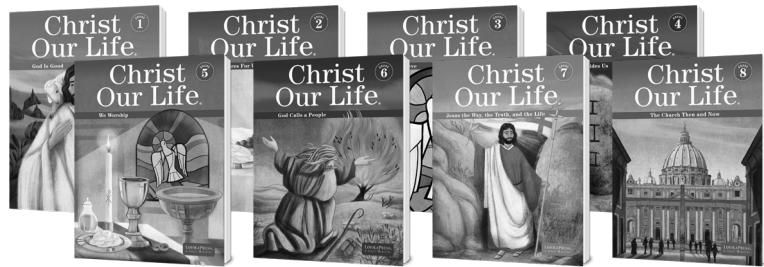
For Parents and Children

USCCB-Approved Content for Solid Learning



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 Books. *Grades 1–8, downloadable printable PDFs accessible at christourlife.com.*



Student Books: Grades 1–8, Printed



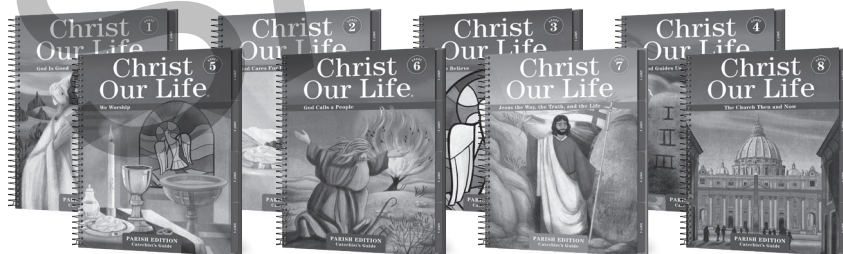
Digital Reviews:

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

Accessible at christourlife.com.

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.**

Themes for a 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
Part 1: The Creed	In Search of the Truth: God Reveals Himself to Us	The Relational God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit	Where Can I Turn To?: Jesus—Fully Divine, Fully Human	No One Is an Island: Church—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
Part 2: The Sacraments	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
Part 3: Moral Life	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
Part 4: Prayer	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
Part 5: Missionary Discipleship	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
The Year in Our Church: Advent and Christmas	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
The Year in Our Church: Lent, Holy Week, and Easter	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 resources and presentation notes so you can capture and maintain participants' attention and engagement.

Five Slideshow Presentations per Year (20 Presentations Across 4 Years)

The presentation for each part engages participants through group prayer, discussion and sharing activities, Scripture readings, and multimedia resources.

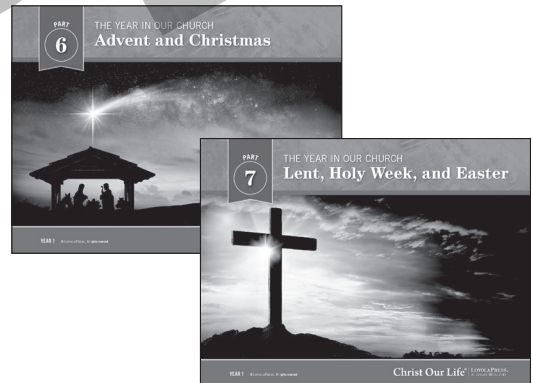
1. The Creed
2. The Sacraments
3. Moral Life
4. Prayer
5. Missionary Discipleship



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.

6. Advent and Christmas
7. Lent, Holy Week, and Easter



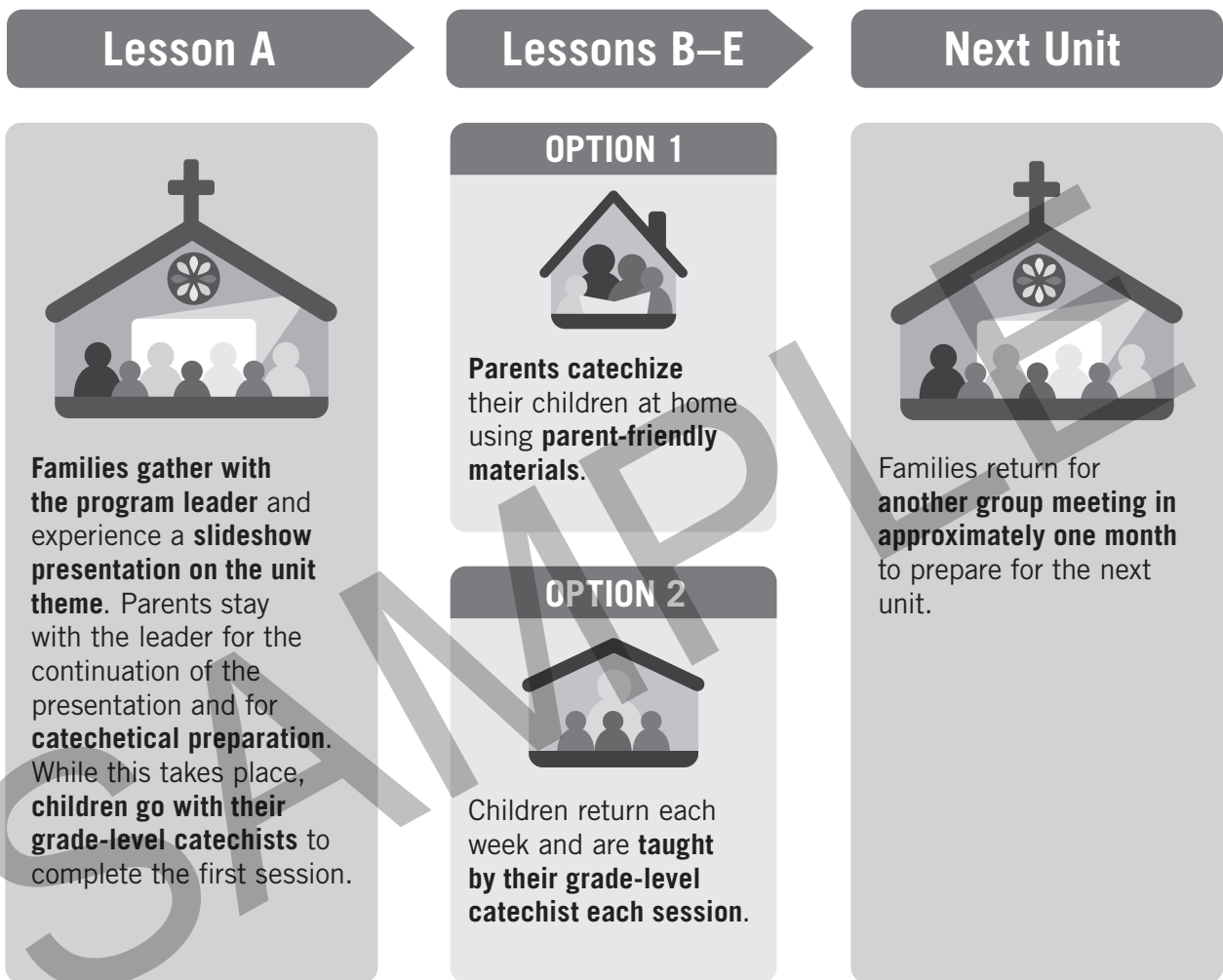
Informative Slideshow Presentations

Two informative slideshow presentations will support parents as they begin the program with their 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 At-Home Editions.

A Program Model with Options

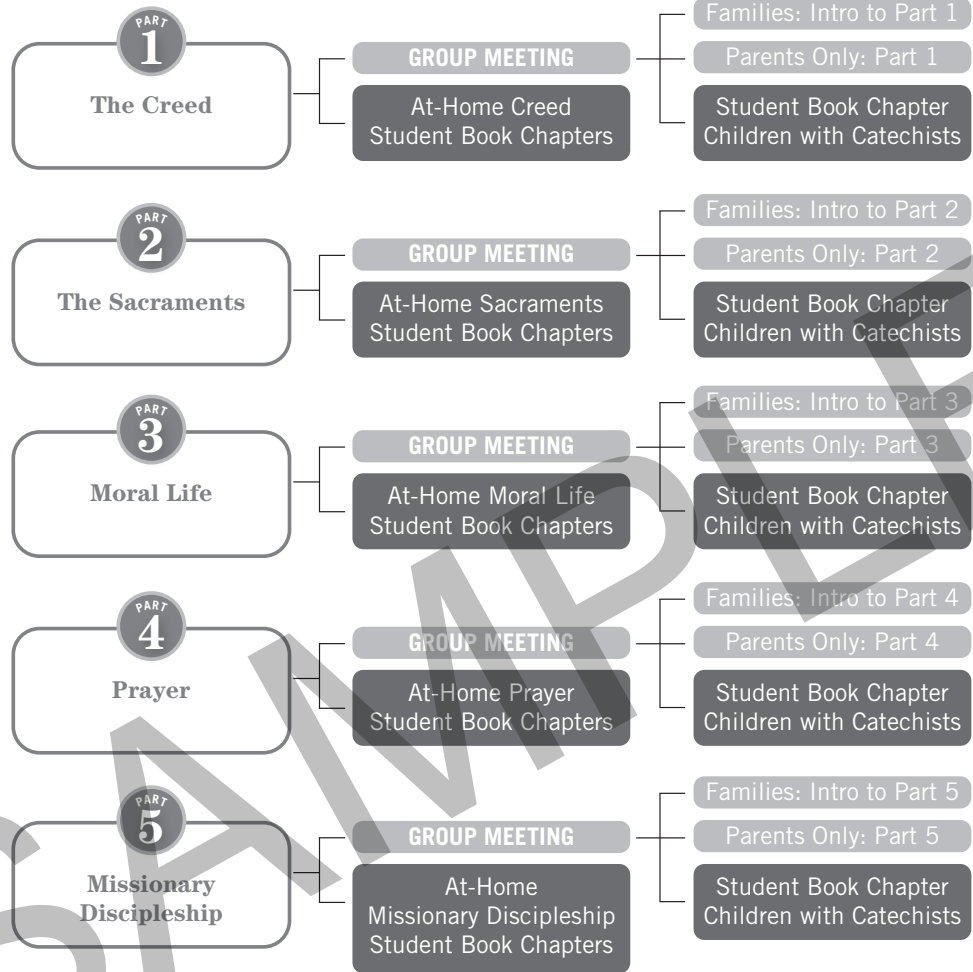
Family catechesis guided by trained catechists!



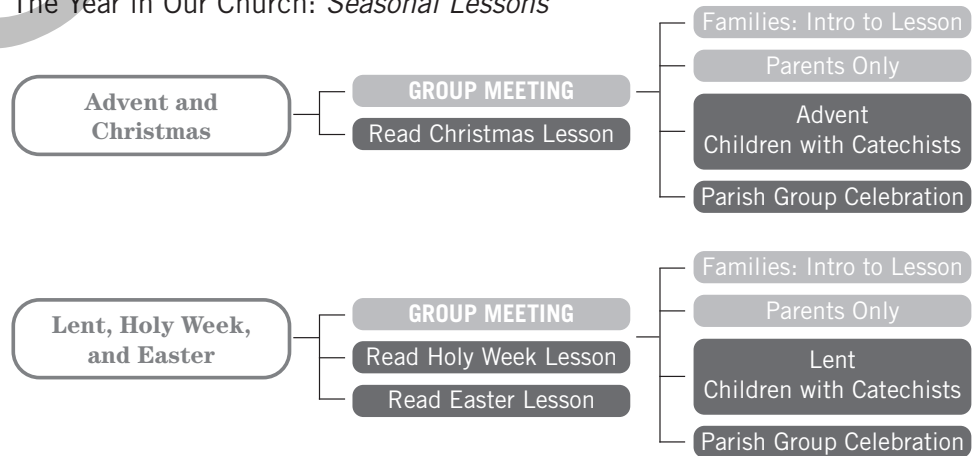
See page 12 for a detailed explanation.

At a Glance

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis is organized into five parts based on the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and Missionary Discipleship. At each group meeting, one chapter from *Christ Our Life* is taught to children by a catechist. The remaining chapters are taught at home by parents or at weekly meetings with a catechist.



The Year in Our Church: *Seasonal Lessons*



How *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis Works

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis combines parish-based group meetings and grade-specific instruction that are led by trained catechists at weekly sessions or at home guided by parents.

Monthly Group Meetings

Parents and children begin each meeting together in community with other families. After the Welcome portion, children meet with their grade-level catechists, where they are taught a chapter from the *Christ Our Life* Student Book.

The program leader uses the slideshow presentation to teach parents more about the part theme during the Connect and Close sections. Parents complete their meeting 15 minutes before their children's grade-level lesson concludes. This allows time for questions, conversations between parents, and time for parents to pick up their children from their grade-level classes.

Welcome	(Parents + Children) 15 minutes Children leave for their respective grade-level lessons.
Connect	(Parents Only) 30 minutes
Close	(Parents Only) 15 minutes

Ongoing Catechesis

In the weeks after the monthly group meeting, parents catechize their children at home using the *Christ Our Life* Student Book in conjunction with the At-Home Edition. Alternatively, children can return each week and be taught a grade-level catechist. The At-Home Edition provides parents with easy-to-follow instructional support designed for an in-home setting. Parents can find additional resources at christourlife.com.

Monitor Progress

After children complete each chapter, they can take that lesson's corresponding Interactive Chapter Review by scanning the QR code on the review page in the Student Book. This way children's understanding can be gauged and progress can be charted. Determine in advance the best way for parents to share the results of this assessment with you. Consider keeping a chart or spreadsheet on which you can track children's progress.

Choosing a Plan That Works for You

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis allows you to tailor the sequence of the presentations and chapters according to the needs of your program and the families. Decide which chapters will be taught at each group meeting and which chapters will be taught at home or at weekly sessions with a grade-level catechist.

The Four Pillars of the Catechism

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis was developed according to the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and Missionary Discipleship. The implementation models on the following pages assume that this is the plan you will be following.

Page 34 of the Director Guide details how the chapters are grouped together at each grade. The first chapter of each group—designated “Lesson A”—is taught by grade-level catechists during the group meeting. The remaining four chapters of the part—designated “Lessons B–E”—are taught by parents at home, using the At-Home Editions. Thus, a total of five chapters are taught for each part of *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis.

Christ Our Life Student Book

You may choose to follow the organization of the Student Book. When following this plan, you will need to keep careful track of what chapters are being covered at home and which chapters will be covered at each group meeting. You may also need to adjust the sequence of the presentations to better correspond with what is being covered at home.

The Liturgical Year

This plan calls for group meetings to correspond with the different seasons of the Church’s liturgical year, thus allowing for year-round catechesis. During Ordinary Time, schedule the group meetings for Parts 1, 2, and 4. The group meeting for Part 3 can be scheduled during the season of Lent, while Part 5 is well-suited for the Easter season. You can follow the chapter groupings on page 34, or you may want to rearrange the sequence of chapters that make the most sense for your program.

Adult Faith Formation

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis can also be easily adapted to form parents and other adults, including adults in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) who are preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. Participants would come to an adult-only group meeting. You will need to adjust the script in the Leader Guide to reflect this. The Welcome section can be replaced with an icebreaker for parents to get to know one another.

Step 2: Plan for the Year

Sample Planning Calendar

The following calendar can help you plan for the year. Decide which chapters are presented at group meetings and which chapters are presented in lessons by a catechist or at home by parents. If you decide to present the chapters according to the pillars of the *Catechism*, see page 34 for the grade-level chapter groupings and the corresponding lesson designations A–E. **The lessons about Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter can be moved to coincide with their corresponding liturgical season.**

August	September
<p>Family Catechesis Catechist Retreat (See page 28.)</p> <p>Family Catechesis Parent Orientation (See page 29.)</p>	<p>Group Meeting Part 1: The Creed, grade-specific Lesson A**</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 1</p>
October	November/December
<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Part 2: The Sacraments, grade-specific Lesson A**</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 2</p>	<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Seasonal Lesson: Advent, followed by a group celebration*</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Families read the Christmas lesson in the Student Book.</p>
January	February
<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Part 3: Moral Life, grade-specific Lesson A**</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Grade-specific Lessons B–E from Part 3**</p>	<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Part 4: Prayer, grade-specific Lesson A**</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 4</p>
March	April
<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Seasonal Lesson: Lent, followed by a group celebration*</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Families read the Holy Week and Easter lessons of the Student Book.</p>	<p>Family Catechesis Group Meeting Part 5: Missionary Discipleship, grade-specific Lesson A**</p> <p>Instruction with Catechists or Parents Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 5</p>
May	
End-of-year group celebration*	

*See pages 19–20 for more information about planning group celebrations.

**See page 34 for the grade-level groupings of chapters and their lesson designations.

Implementation Models

The following pages provide suggestions for presenting the *Christ Our Life* Family Catechesis program according to the four pillars of the *Catechism*. These models can be easily adapted to fit the needs of your parish. **Please note: The lessons about Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter can be moved to coincide with their corresponding liturgical seasons.**

Implementation Model 1: School-Year Monthly Model

This model follows a typical faith formation year. Monthly group meetings are held nine times per year and last about an hour and 15 minutes. Seasonal group meetings take place at appropriate times during the year.

Month	Group Meetings	Instruction with Catechists or Parents
August	Parent Orientation (see page 29)	None
September	Part 1: The Creed Grade-specific Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 1
October	Part 2: The Sacraments Grade-specific Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 2
November/December	Seasonal Lesson: Advent/Christmas Seasonal lesson with grade-level catechist followed by a group celebration*	Christmas lesson from the Special Seasons and Lessons section of the Student Book
January	Part 3: Moral Life Grade-specific Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 3
February	Part 4: Prayer Grade-specific Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 4
March	Seasonal Lesson: Lent/Holy Week/Easter Seasonal lesson with grade-level catechist followed by a group celebration*	Holy Week and Easter lessons from the Special Seasons and Lessons section of the Student Book
April	Part 5: Missionary Discipleship Grade-specific Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Grade-specific Lessons B–E** from Part 5
May	End-of-year group celebration*	None

*See pages 18–19 for more information about planning group celebrations.

**See page 34 for the grade-level groupings of chapters and their lesson designations.

Implementation Model 2: Semester Model

This approach calls for seven meetings over 15 weeks. Encourage group attendance and participation at Mass during the weeks when group meetings are not scheduled. The semester model can also be used as a means for helping children whose faith formation has lapsed catch up to their grade-level peers.

Week	Group Meeting	Instruction with Catechists or Parents
1	Part 1: The Creed Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 1: Lessons B and C**
2	None	Part 1: Lessons D and E**
3	Part 2: The Sacraments Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 2: Lessons B and C**
4	None	Part 2: Lessons D and E**
5	Part 3: Moral Life Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 3: Lessons B and C**
6	None	Part 3: Chapters D and E
7	Seasonal Lesson: Advent or Lent (depending on the time of year) followed by an optional group celebration*	None
8	None	Corresponding lessons from the Special Seasons and Lessons section in the Student Book
9	Part 4: Prayer Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	None
10	None	Part 4: Lessons B and C**
11	None	Part 4: Lessons D and E**
12	Part 5: Missionary Discipleship Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	None
13	None	Part 5: Lessons B and C**
14	None	Part 5: Lessons D and E**
15	End-of-year celebration*	

*See pages 19–20 for more information about planning group celebrations.

**See page 34 for the grade-level groupings of chapters and their lesson designations.

Implementation Model 3: 10-Day Summer Intensive

The summer intensive program takes place over 10 days. Plan a parent orientation before the first 10-Day Summer Intensive meeting. See page 30 for a suggested parent orientation plan. Then parents and children will meet every other day for group meetings, following the same format described on page 12.

In this model, children will learn about the seasons in the church year through the lessons that appear in the Special Seasons and Lessons section at the back of the Student Book.

Day	Group Meeting	Instruction with Catechists or Parents
1	Part 1: The Creed Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 1: Lessons B and C**
2	None	Part 1: Lessons D and E**
3	Part 2: The Sacraments Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 2: Lessons B and C**
4	None	Part 2: Lessons D and E**
5	Part 3: Moral Life Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 3: Lessons B and C**
6	None	Part 3: Lessons D and E**
7	Part 4: Prayer Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 4: Lessons B and C**
8	None	Part 4: Lessons D and E**
9	Part 5: Missionary Discipleship Lesson A** with grade-level catechist	Part 5: Lessons B and C**
10	None	Part 5: Lessons D and E**
Optional	End-of-year celebration*	

*See pages 19–20 for more information about planning group celebrations.

**See page 34 for the grade-level groupings of chapters and their lesson designations.

Methods and Models of Family Catechesis

Christ Our Life Family Catechesis is readily adaptable and complements many methods and models of family faith formation.

Family Faith Formation Models	How These Models Work with <i>Christ Our Life</i> Family Catechesis
Monthly Faith Formation Meetings with At-Home Catechesis	<i>Christ Our Life</i> Family Catechesis combines parish-based group meetings and grade-specific instruction led by trained catechists with at-home lessons guided by parents.
Parish-based Catechesis with Monthly Faith Formation Meetings	Children meet with trained catechists for grade-specific instruction. Monthly meetings bring parents and children together for the slideshow presentations.
Multimedia Events	<i>Christ Our Life</i> Family Catechesis uses professionally developed, catechetically sound, and well-paced slideshow presentations for each part that include links to multimedia resources.
Family Prayer Celebration	Prayer is central to <i>Christ Our Life</i> Family Catechesis; it begins and ends each group meeting, helping build community and prayerful practice.
Activity-Centered Approach	Children, their parents, and fellow participants take part in a sharing activity during the Welcome section of each meeting. Each group celebration centers on a family or group activity.
Family Discipleship	Missionary discipleship is fundamental to <i>Christ Our Life</i> Family Catechesis. Families are formed so that they can go forth as missionary disciples and share the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith with the world.
Family Christian Holiday Celebration	Group celebrations for Advent/Christmas and Lent/Holy Week/Easter offer simple ways to carry out celebrations that build community, fellowship, and faith.
Family Pilgrimage	Consider sponsoring a family pilgrimage where families visit a holy place or sacred site together as an end-of-the year group celebration.
Family Retreat Day	You may wish to make the seasonal lessons into family retreat days. Include time for prayer, reflection, discussion, and opportunities to build community among parish families and within the parish community. Ideas for retreats are available at loyolapress.com .