

Rise Up for Mission: Best Practices for Successful (and *Evangelizing*) Catechetical Leadership

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Formation

- Ground everything in terms of a living and personal relationship with God...*and* one another. Listen to and share personal faith journeys – Forming Intentional Disciples.
- *Front-loaded Focus*: Baptism Ministry...move from hoop jumping task to *conversion*. (Get away from “class” language in any adult formation.) *The* most important evangelizing ministry. Starts with the phone call or email...can be seen extending to Pre/K/1st Grade!
- Expand beyond parish *information* in bulletin and parish website to *outreach and formation* utilizing Facebook/Twitter...and plain old email. (Resource people where they live and learn...digitally.)
- Give emphasis to Catholic spirituality and Scripture...what people *want* (...as well liturgy and sacraments...what they *need*).
- Shift sacrament prep for parents (and all parent formation) ...from logistics and catechesis...to fostering of conversion (aka. evangelization). Parents or bust! Family formation must have a strong parent-specific dimension.
- Lead with language of Catholic “faith” more than “Church”. (“Natural Law” better than “the Church says” as entry into thorny moral issues, for example.)

- Sacramental Catch Up vs. RCIA Adapted for Children and Youth
- Embracing the “loose thread” folks...listen, care, accompany. Do *not* tell them to come back in August! They are Jesus.
- Develop experience-laden ministries with theological reflection built in. (Post-moderns want *experience*.) Form people to become reflective...with a Catholic consciousness/worldview.
- Don't teach *to* the sacrament. Teach *through* the sacrament (i.e. Confirmation and discipleship lifestyle...and Eucharist). Form for the long-run, for something to grow *into*...not *out* of.
- Praying well with children, youth and adults. Lectionary-based liturgical prayer...to form a Catholic liturgical sensibility.
- Culturally-sensitive *and* prophetically faithful: Holding tension in the Catholic message. (i.e. moral issues of the day)
- Build formation for children and youth with intentionality, under the assumption that we're going to *lose* them...not that we are going to keep them. This is reality, not heresy.
- RE Registration Marketing Outreach... connect with and invite *far* beyond the parish data base. Major evangelization opportunity!

Tom's resource web page: <http://bit.ly/1w8NH50>

Google “Tom Quinlan webinars”...various, including USCCB (three in one location)

Books:

[How to Talk to Children about The Mass](#), Twenty-Third Publications, 2017

[Excellence in Ministry: Best Practices for Successful Catechetical Leadership](#), Loyola Press, 2017

Parish

- Who is the parish? Have a Canon Law vision.
- Form/evangelize from the inside out...parish staff and leadership.
- *Devotional vs. Missional Church*...strike the balance, hold the tension.
- Effective welcoming and intentional orientation process. Fight the *anonymous Catholic* syndrome; “click here to become a member” ...seriously?
- Mid-lifers, the Vulnerable and the Wounded...when things break down we open to grace.
- *Affect* attracts...or repels. Eye contact, facial expression, vocal intonation are essential elements in evangelization...and every aspect of parish. Grace builds upon nature. Vibe matters!
- Trend: *Customization* because “it’s all about me” ...post-modern intuition. Counter-trend: Invitation to participate in something bigger than yourself...objective truth, community (including the communion of saints), building the Reign of God. Hold tension.
- Sunday liturgy is *huge*. It reflects *and* propels. Liturgy does more to form a parish (for good or for ill) than anything else!
- Wedding, Funerals, Baptisms are opportunities to evangelize! (...guests and one’s own.)
- Evangelization is a *ground* game. Person by person, family by family, moment by moment...gaining trust, growing relationships.

Leadership

- Gifts/charisms discernment and empowerment. Expand stakeholders. Build and form teams. (Don't guard responsibilities...give away!) Pay special attention to young adults.
- Assume the best in people's motivations and intentions...not the worst.
- Kindness and graciousness is needed more than ever. People's wells out there are dry...and often poisoned. Help to de-toxify people (if possible) and systems we serve.
- Create openness to seeing connections, possibilities, synergies... potential within a parish. Take the blinders off...within yourself... and invite it from others. Peripheral vision!
- Deep reverence for and docility to the Holy Spirit. Make friends with the Holy Spirit and ask to be an instrument of the Spirit's divine will. (Create a parish culture of calling the Holy Spirit down and see what happens.)
- Don't be a functionary. Be a leader. Be a risk-taker. Vision, not minutia, should define and drive you. Recognize your importance...see the real, symbolic power in your role. Affirm, invite and challenge.
- Psycho-spiritual connection. Process and address your stuff elsewhere...so that you can get out of your issues and insecurities (when in a parish role) and into the other person(s): *empathy*