

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of religious instruction is to teach Christ. The teacher aims at presenting to the children the words of Christ and even more the Person of Christ, Who is *the Word* in which is contained all truth.

It is chiefly through the inspired pages of Sacred Scripture and the divinely guided actions of the Sacred Liturgy that we come to know the Person of Christ. The better we know and love the Person of Christ, the more we will be able to understand the meaning of what He tells us. A Catechism helps us to understand the meaning of what Christ has taught, but we will understand the Catechism only to the extent that we aim at understanding Christ Himself.

The Baltimore Catechism is the official Catechism of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and has been the standard text for Catholic schools in the United States for many years.

St. Joseph's Baltimore Catechism Number One is a new approach to the Baltimore Catechism. Its aim is to take the main point of each lesson and to show how that is illustrated or exemplified in some event of Sacred Scripture. The concrete picture language of the Bible will be a big help to the child to understand better the main truths presented in the more abstract language of the questions and answers of the official Baltimore Catechism.

We would like to note here, though, that nothing is completely new in the Church, not even the kerygmatic approach to the teaching of religion, which is aimed at here. The Kerygma of the Gospel, heralding of the Good News of Salvation in the Person of Jesus Christ, is as old as the Church. But in our times there is, thank God, a renewed emphasis on this as the fundamental way to present Christianity to children, instead of putting so much emphasis on individual truths of the faith that the simple focus on Him who is Truth Itself was not always maintained. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we should endeavor to use the best of new and old.

In this catechism, each lesson begins with an illustration from the Bible which is explained for the child. From the Scriptural

example the child will find it easy to grasp the main idea of the lesson. It will not then be too difficult for the teacher to explain the individual questions. A more detailed explanation of the questions and answers themselves is given in St. Joseph's Baltimore Catechism Number Two.

With each lesson other readings from the Bible are suggested. The object is to introduce the child even at an early age to the Bible itself where we have the Person and message of Our Lord Jesus Christ presented by the Holy Spirit Himself. And just as Our Lord knew how to present His divine message even to children, so will the pages of Sacred Scripture have much to say even to very young minds and hearts. They will not understand everything they read, but they will get much out of it, and if they are given a love for the Bible, they will read and understand more later on. If they learn to love the Bible, they will fall in love with Christ.

With each lesson suggestions are made for incorporating the liturgy. The exercise is described as a liturgical *action*, something the children can do together. It is suggested that when a Psalm is given as an example, the children be divided into two groups (perhaps boys and girls) and recite it alternately. If they can learn to sing what is suggested, that would be better yet. It is not expected that all the examples of liturgical actions will be used, as time or the ability of the children may not permit it. But the more they are used, the better. It will give the children a greater sense of community, of being together in their worship of Christ, and through this a greater sense of the Mystical Body and a greater sense of Christ Himself. This is the object of the Catechism and it is the hope of the author that this will be achieved by those who use it.

FATHER BENNET, C.P.

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PRAYERS FOR EVERY DAY

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

IN the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (3 years' indulgence; with holy water, 7 years)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OUR FATHER Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

THE HAIL MARY

HAIL MARY, full of grace! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE CONFITEOR

I CONFESS to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and



Jesus blesses the children who came to Him

36. THE SACRAMENTALS

We read in the Holy Bible:

"And they were bringing little children to Him that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw them, He was indignant, and said to them, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as a little child will not enter into it.' And He put His arms about them, and laying His hands upon them, He began to bless them" (Mark 10, 13-16).

EXPLANATION

Our Lord blesses people and things through His priests

Our Lord blessed little children. He loved them and showed it by this blessing. His blessing was a sign of love and a promise of His help.

The priest takes Our Lord's place. He blesses people and things, so that they can better show forth God's honor and glory. The blessings and the things blessed are called "sacramentals."

Practice: Treat blessed things with respect.

CATECHISM

205. What are sacramentals?

Sacramentals are holy things or actions of which the Church makes use to obtain for us from God spiritual and temporal favors.

206. Which are the sacramentals most used by Catholics?

The sacramentals most used by Catholics are: holy water, blessed candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Blessed things should be treated with
2. The use of sacramentals obtains for us spiritual and temporal from God.
3. Holy water, rosaries and medals are

OTHER READINGS FROM THE BIBLE

1. Jacob blessing his sons, Genesis 49 (especially verse 28).
2. Blessing of ashes, Matthew 11, 21.
3. Blessing of palms, John 12, 12-13.

CLASS LITURGICAL ACTION

Say (or sing) together Psalm 66 which asks God for His blessing on ourselves and our work.