Catechetic Module: FAMILY AS THE DOMESTIC CHURCH
(Revised 7.27.16 Debbie)

Module Description
Working toward their Archdiocesan catechetical certificate, individuals will reflect on how in their role as a catechist (or a Catholic school teacher) they can support the family also known as the “Domestic Church.” Using the Church documents on family, as well as the USCCB’s standards cited in Service Certification for Specialized Ecclesial Ministers and the TCC Guidelines for Formation of Parish Catechists, participants will discern their role in building up and supporting the Domestic Church within their classrooms. As a result of participating in this module, individuals will develop a sense of what the “modern” family looks like in the Catholic Church and formulate a plan to support their parishes’ families to live out their mission as the “Domestic Church.”

Facilitator’s Preparation

- **Suggested Time:** 2 hours with break
- **Big Idea:** The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion and for this reason is called "the domestic church." (MA 5.3.3)
- **Essential Question:** How can I, as a catechist, support my parish’s families to live out their mission as the “domestic church?”
- **Learning Targets (Selected from the Catechetical Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation “CFLFF”)**
  NOTE: All learning targets that appear in the CFLFF and have some connection with this lesson’s topic are listed below. They are included as supporting information for catechists facilitating this lesson and may or may not be shared with learners. Some, however, appear in the lesson plan itself and should be used as directed. Module facilitators will want to review these targets while planning to conduct this lesson; some may assist in answering questions that learners might ask during this session.

  Enduring Understandings/ Core Concepts (for this lesson/in order of importance):
  - MA 5.3.3 - The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion and for this reason is called "the domestic church." [CCC#1666; 2204]
  - MA 5.3.1 - The family has the mission to become a community of life and love in an effort that will find fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. [CCC#2205-08; 2224; 2252]
  - MA 5.2.10 - The human family, originally “one,” is restored and reconciled in Christ. [CCC#2850]
  - MA 5.3.2 - The home is the first school of Christian life and parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of faith to their children. [CCC#1666; 2225-26]
  - MA 4.3.3 - The first teachers of prayer are parents and other members of the family, the domestic church. In the family, one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, forgiveness, and above all, divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life. [CCC#1657; 2685; 2694]
  - MA 1.3.13 - Human beings, being made in the image and likeness of a God who is a relational God, are innately called to family and community life as participating subjects. [CCC#193-195]
  - MA 3.2.15 - The Fourth Commandment speaks of the parental and filial duties and responsibilities that children have towards their parents, the duties brothers and sisters have towards one another, and the responsibilities adult children have towards their parents. Family members are called to carry out the Church’s mission by fostering mutual love in the home and through that love to build up the Church community and society. [CCC#2196; 2199-2200; 2209-10; 2218-19; 2248; 2251]
  - MA 5.3.6 - While the Christian family is called to be a community of faith, hope and love, filial duty and responsibility calls children to respect, show gratitude, just obedience, and assistance to their parents and those God has vested with authority. Filial respect fosters harmony in all of family life. [CCC#2196-97; 2214-16; 2248; 2251]
Families are communities of love called to help one another to grow in faith and to serve those in need, not only for their own satisfaction, but for the strength of society and the good of the whole Church. [CCC#2210; 2254]

The family is called to live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, persons with disabilities, and the poor. [CCC#2208]

The parish is where each Christian family realizes its catholicity. [CCC#2179]

Catholic social thought has developed around seven key themes: the dignity of the human person; the call to family, community, and participation; rights and responsibilities; preferential option for the poor; dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and stewardship of God's creation. [CCC#344; 361; 544; 912; 953; 1503; 1586; 1807; 1882; 1886; 1889; 1907; 1925-27; 1930; 1935; 1939-48; 1956; 2203; 2205-08; 2213; 2224; 2237; 2245; 2402; 2407; 2417; 2419-31; 2438-39; 2443-46; 2451-52; 2455-62; 2495; 2556-27; 1930; 1935; 1939-48; 1956; 2203; 2205-08; 2213; 2224; 2237; 2245; 2402; 2407; 2417; 2419-31; 2438-39; 2443-46; 2451-52; 2455-62; 2495; 2556]

USCCB Certification Standards, Core Competencies (1997): A lay ecclesial minister shall...

3.10 Social sciences and humanities. Know and integrate into ministerial practice a foundational understanding of the social sciences and humanities.

National Directory for Catechesis

236-39, 100-101, 120, 161, 234-35: families
204-6 208, 246: catechesis supporting families
126, 135, 142-44, 178, 199-200, 200-3, 234-35: catechetical responsibilities of families
100-101, 175: “church of the home”
175: the fourth commandment
234-5, 259-60: home based catechesis and family based catechesis

Suggested Resources

Classroom Environment/ Prayer Table:

- The prayer table should have the liturgically correct color table cloth with candle and plant or flowers.
- Included on the prayer table should be items that represents “family life” (e.g. golden rings, baptismal candle, baby shoes, wedding pictures, picture of older couple holding hands, etc.)
- If possible, picture of the Holy Family

Supplies:

- Handouts
- Newsprint or poster board

Works Cited/ Future Readings:

- Bible, CCC, National Directory for Catechesis, General Directory for Catechesis
- Love is our Mission: the Family Fully Alive (Our Sunday Visitor, 2014)
- Familiaris Consortio#17, St. John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, November 22, 1981.
- Follow the Way of Love: a Pastoral Message to Families (USCCB, 2002)
- A Family Perspective in Church and Society Committee on Marriage and Family (USCCB)
- The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World – Instrumentum Laboris (Vatican City 2015, Synod of Bishops XIV, Ordinary General Assembly)
- Address of His Holiness Pope Francis (Prayer Vigil in Preparation of Synod of Bishops XIV, Ordinary General Assembly, October 3, 2015, St. Peter’s Square)
- YouTube:
  - [t_usou3DTs (“The Catholic Family” – 3:18 minutes)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_usou3DTs)
  - [vVhcaEEmDHo (“The Domestic Church” – 4:13 minutes)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVhcaEEmDHo)

Catholic Music:
Catechetical Module: FAMILY AS THE DOMESTIC CHURCH
(Rev.7.27.16 - DJ)

LESSON PLAN

Post the Essential Question or write it on the board. It should remain visible to learners throughout the lesson.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Distribute “A Family Prayer” handout with visuals if you do not have access to Powerpoint. Ask all to read aloud the prayer after the video.
  1. Video
  2. Joshua 24:15
  3. Family Prayer

Engage (10 minutes)

- As our opening prayer states: All Christian families are called by God to be signs of living faith.
- St. John Paul II tells us: “The family is the domestic Church….the home is the Church in miniature.”
- Even our promulgated Framework document (CFLFF) declares: The home is the first school of Christian life and parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of faith to their children.
  [MA 5.3.2 (CCC#1666; 2225-26)]
- Return to the Opening Prayer handout or PP prayer: When we think of “family,” we often visualize two parents and children. However, in the 21st century, “family” connotes a variety of family units. Look at the pictures on your Opening Prayer handout.
- Turn & talk with a neighbor and cite 21st century examples of family membership. What type(s) of family units have you been a member over your lifetime?
- Share a few ideas. (i.e. single-parent families—with only a father OR a mother; single-parent family with an unwed mother; childless couples; multi-racial and cultural families; multi-generational families living under one roof; same sex parents)

Essential Question (3 minutes)

- Share (and post for the entire lesson) the Essential Question: How can I, as a catechist, support my parish’s families to live out their mission as the “domestic church”? [An Essential Question is one that is shared at the beginning of a lesson and then is used as evaluation at the end of the lesson; it is YOUR “cognitive bookend,” YOUR focus, YOUR goal for learning to self-evaluate YOUR understanding. It also helps ME “keep on track” with this module’s topic.] (You might try tent cards for each table with EQ on front and back.)
- Tell learners: While you may not be able to answer this EQ now, my goal as a facilitator is to provide information and activities during the next two hours so that you will be able to answer it.

Explore (10 minutes)

- Transition/Group Activity: So if current family structures have changed drastically over the past 40 years, how have you and your parish already “connected” to the families in faith formation or Catholic school learners? What specific examples can you cite to illustrate that you already partner with and support families as the primary teachers of the faith?
• Allow time for groups to work. Ask each to record on newsprint specific ideas and post them around the room. [Note: Do not take time to share lists nor spend too much time on this activity, as the “posted lists” will be referenced later in this lesson.]

---

**Explain & Debrief (50 minutes + 10 minute break)**

• CCC#1666: “The Christian home is the place where the children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family is rightfully called ‘the domestic church’, a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian clarity.”

• St. John Paul II in his 1981 Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* #17 gives the Catholic Church four general tasks to guide families in fulfilling their mission. “Hence the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God’s love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride.”

• Before you hand out the Worksheet, hand out “Church Documents and Family Catechesis” handout for reference. It will aid in the participants’ understanding of the Four Tasks.

• Distribute the handout/Worksheet: “Four Tasks & Cornerstones of the Family as Domestic Church.”

• **Individual & Group Activity:**
  - Slowly read the first task listed in the left-hand column of the worksheet.
  - Using a Think/View/Group/Share strategy, follow these steps beginning in each of the rows:

  1. Return to Task #1 from *Familiaris Consortio* #17 and read it aloud: *Forming a community of persons.* Ask learners to turn to their partner to discuss and jot down and complete in the “cell” on their worksheet what they think that means to them now. Hint: If forming a community of persons is a part of the family mission then how does that affect the way we interact with each other? If learners need more of a “nudge,” read through the questions on the “Facilitator’s ANSWER SHEET.” [How might family members speak to each other in a sacred way in their home? How might families spend time together to form a home community? How might families settle differences in a sacred/holy manner?]

  View segment of the YouTube video as suggested:

  *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVhcaEEmDHo*

  • 0:00 to 1:40 – Pause and allow time for learners on their own to continue to complete Cornerstone #1 under “What I learned from the video” [Columns 3 & 4]

  2. Next, read aloud Task #2: *Serves life.* Ask learners to turn to their partner and jot down what they think that means, nudging---if necessary---with the questions: [How does how you act and what you do serve life in your family?]

  View segment of the YouTube video as suggested:

  *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVhcaEEmDHo*

  • 1:41 to 2:09 – Repeat for Cornerstone #2 – Pause and allow time for learners on their own to continue to complete Cornerstone #1 under “What I learned from the video” [Columns 3 & 4]
3. Repeat this with Task #3. (See “Facilitator’s ANSWER SHEET” for questions.)
   • 2:10 to 2:38 – Repeat for Cornerstone #3
4. Repeat this with Task #4. (See “Facilitator’s ANSWER SHEET” for questions.)
   • 2:39 to 4:13 – Repeat for Cornerstone #4
5. Allow learners to work in groups to share their individual written comments. Ask all to extend their understanding by completing the far right-hand column, if new ideas are discussed.

   • Debrief/ Formative Evaluation/ Checking for Understanding:
     o Return to the slide earlier showing CCC#1666.
     o Returning to this definition of “Domestic Church” shared earlier in this lesson, as a group define “domestic church” in your own words, and reference the 4 tasks & cornerstones in your answer.
     o Give groups enough time to process and synthesize this information. This is high-level thinking!
     o Share a few groups’ comments.
   • In Summary/Lesson Closure: Share this statement from St. John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio 17*: The family has the mission to become more and more what it is, that is to say, a community of life and love, in an effort that will find fulfillment, as will everything created and redeemed, in the Kingdom of God.

**Evaluation (5 minutes)**

- Return to the Essential Question for this lesson: *How can I, as a catechist, support my parish’s families to live out their mission as the “domestic church?”*
- Ask learners to return to their Worksheets and to complete---as a group---the bottom “cell” (“Applying the Cornerstones to My Parish”).

**Self-Reflection/ Mystagogy (5 minutes)**

- “As the family goes, so goes the whole world in which we live.” (St. John Paul II)
- **Personal Commitment to Action:** On an “exit slip,” write down TWO ways that you will commit to partnering with your parish families to support their efforts of faith formation. [An exit slip is a quick write to a question on a half-sheet of paper; this is left with the catechist as learners exit the session; answers inform the catechist of what was grasped and any confusion that remains and still needs to be addressed. Catechist may or may not request that learners write their names on exit slips. The use of “exit slips” is also one way to evaluate the effectiveness and clarity of the catechetical lesson.]
- **For Future Reference:** Distribute handout and/or websites for “Church Documents and Family Catechesis.”

**Closing Prayer (10 minutes)**

- Take a moment to prepare yourself to listen to the gift of God’s Word in Sacred Scripture. In silence, center yourself to become more prayerful as you remind yourself of God’s gracious presence.
- Prayer service based upon Joshua 24:15 (Handout: Closing Prayer).