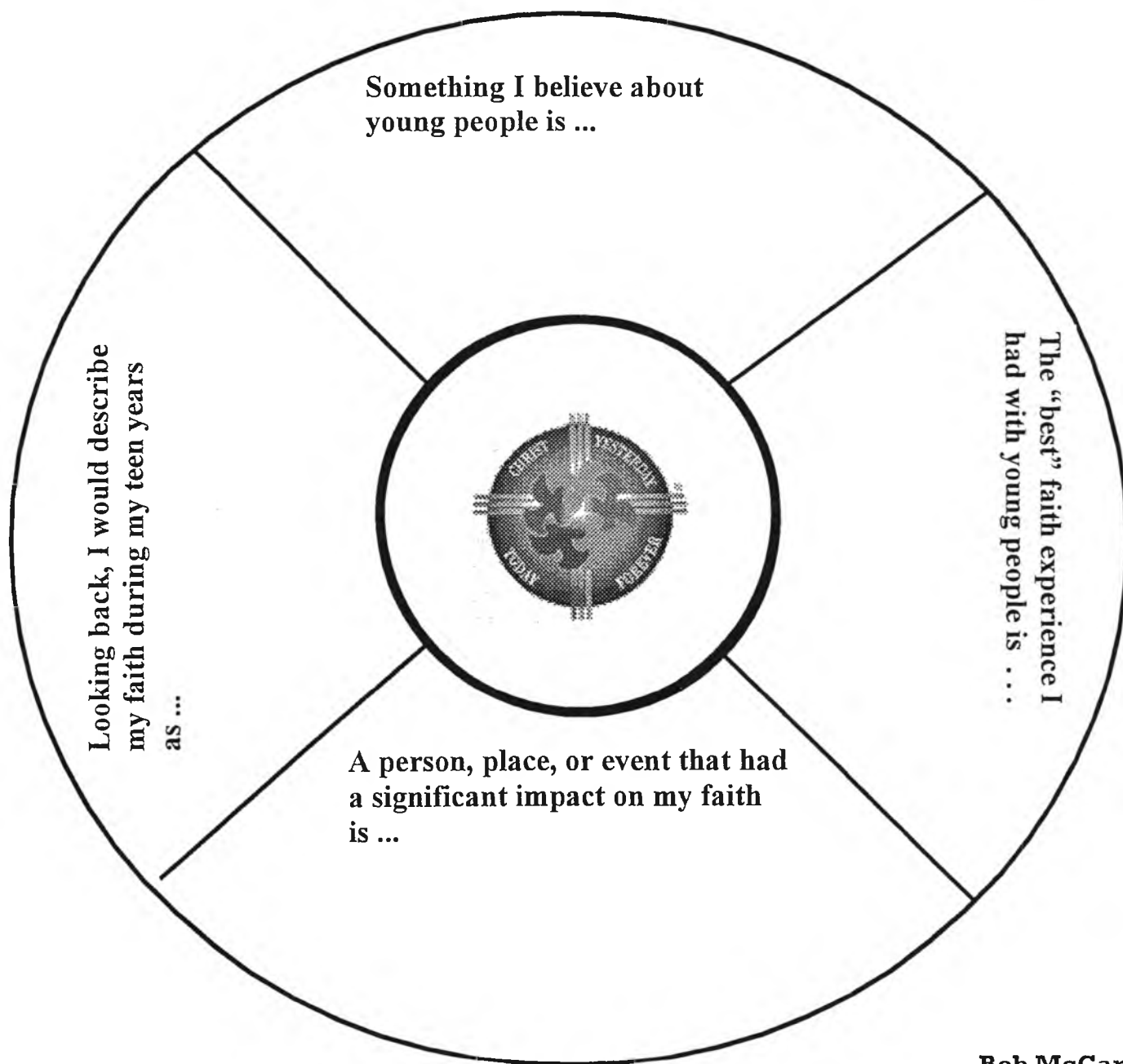


Adolescent Catechesis—is it Madness? *Or is there a Method to the Madness?*



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The State of Adolescent Catechesis

Why is catechizing adolescents so challenging?

My working definition of adolescent catechesis is ...

The outcomes of adolescent catechesis are ...

Signs that adolescent catechesis is not working are ...

Signs that adolescent catechesis is working are ...

Adolescent Catechesis: Framing the Context

Characteristics of Youth Spirituality

- Youth need a first hand faith – an opportunity to grapple with faith questions.
- Youth need spiritual experiences AND a spiritual context.
- Youth need to relate their spiritual life to other aspects of their life.
- Youth need to express their faith in concrete terms (“do” faith).
- Youth need to connect the vertical dimension of faith with the horizontal dimension of faith (Eucharist and justice).
- Youth sometimes have unrealistic expectations of faith.

Fundamental Questions

- ❑ How would you describe the reality of adolescent catechesis today?
- ❑ What are the signs of hope? What are the signs of chaos?
- ❑ What does a “catechized” 8th grader look like? A 10th grader? A 12th grader? How do we measure effectiveness?
- ❑ What is the relationship between catechesis, youth ministry, and evangelization? What are the fundamental tasks of each?
- ❑ What is the relationship between methodology and content?
- ❑ What is the desired outcome and/or ultimate goal of adolescent catechesis?

Statements to Ponder

- If adult catechesis was effective, we would be in less of a panic over adolescent catechesis.
- If young people really knew the teachings and practices of the Church, they would act like real disciples of Jesus.
- If young people really lived as disciples of Jesus, they would want to know more about the teachings and practices of the Church.
- Our goal should be to put Jesus in their hearts, rather than put their bodies in the pews.
- Catechesis is an essential moment in the mission of evangelization.

Major Updates in Adolescent Catechesis since 1986

- ❖ Paradigm shift: forming disciples (GDC, RTV) and providing the skills for discipleship.
- ❖ Effective catechesis with adolescents must engage them in understanding, knowing and entering into a relationship with Jesus and his teachings.
- ❖ Catechesis entails a comprehensive and systematic formation in faith that includes more than instruction. It is an apprenticeship to the entire Christian life.
- ❖ Holistic catechesis empowers young people “to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Definitions

"The aim of catechetical activity consists of this: to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith" (GDC, #66)

"Catechesis is a systematic, planned and intentional pastoral activity ... directed towards the kind of teaching and learning which emphasizes growth in Christian faith through understanding, reflection, and transformation." (CAC, CT #19,21)

"The ministry of catechesis helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community and increases their knowledge of the core content of the Catholic faith ... and live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus in their daily lives, especially through a life of prayer, justice, and loving service." (RTV, p. 29)

"The ministry of catechesis fosters growth in Catholic faith in all three dimensions - trusting (heart), knowing and believing (mind), and doing (will)." (RTV, p.29)

"Adolescent catechesis is a call to discipleship ... and is an apprenticeship to the entire Christian life." (MAC, draft)

Principles for Adolescent Catechesis

Adolescent catechesis ...

Focuses on forming young disciples and leading them towards committed faith.

Deepens Catholic identity by immersing young people in a systematic study of Catholic tradition and teaching.

Is anchored in the developing person and responds to the diverse developmental needs of young people (younger/older adolescents).

Respects the variability in maturation rates and learning styles of young people.

Uses a variety of formats, environments, schedules, technologies and techniques expressing sensitivity to their expanding freedom, autonomy and personal needs.

Responds to the learning needs of adolescents by focusing on a thematic approach that provides systematic content and the possibility of a scope and sequence from childhood to adult faith formation.

Responds to cultural awareness and diversity regarding faith traditions.

(Mission of Adolescent Catechesis, draft)

Basic Catechetical Approaches

Sacramental Catechesis

Liturgical Catechesis

Biblical Catechesis

Systematic Catechesis

Formats and Strategies

Small faith sharing groups

Religious education instruction

Youth nights/meetings

Retreats

Service and mission trips

Youth rallies and conferences

Pilgrimages

Summer bible schools/camps

Theology Institutes

Teaching/Learning Process

