



**PEP
TALKS**
FOR

Catechists

ENCOURAGEMENT,
SUPPORT,
GUIDANCE

JANET SCHAEFFLER, OP

Why did I say yes? We're about to begin, and it seems so overwhelming!

God continually says to us, “I have called you by name: you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1). Within God’s constant, affirming call, there is always an invitation to use our gifts for others.

Even though the invitation to be a catechist might come through another person (our DRE, pastor, a friend, etc.), the invitation ultimately comes from God. We aren’t merely “helping Father” or “assisting the DRE”; we have been distinctly called by God because of our baptism, because of our gifts.

As we begin this year—and even throughout the months and years ahead—we might wonder why we said yes. Are we really competent enough to do this? There’s a saying that reminds us that “God doesn’t call the qualified; God qualifies the called.”

Because this is a call, a vocation, when we do our part (taking part in our ongoing formation, developing our catechetical skills, and building love and respect for the learners), we know we are doing God’s work. God is saying to us, “You are the one I need. You are the one who will make a difference. I know you, and I have chosen you.” Responding to that call from God, we use our gifts and our committed faith for the good of others.

TO DO » Remember these words: “God who began this work in you will carry it on to completion” (PHILIPPIANS 1:6).

TO PRAY » *Inviting God, deepen in me your call. Strengthen me to do your work.*

It's difficult to bring God to people. How could I ever do that?

You're right: it is difficult. But the reality is, that is not our job. We don't bring God to people. God is already and always there. Our role is to invite people to slow down. Our role is to help surround them with experiences in which they become more aware of how God is already in their lives.

Even though we are engaged in catechesis, which is different from education, the definition of "education" is not "to put in," but "to draw out." All catechesis (and true education) is the drawing out from the learner of what is already there. Catechists encourage and enable the learner to notice God, who is already there.

As catechists, of course, we need to pay attention to our experiences of God in order to walk with others and guide them to recognize their ways of experiencing God. We might have different experiences, but it's who we are—and how we live our relationship with God—that influences others. For instance, people might not care (or get excited) about the history of various forms of prayer within our tradition, but they'll listen when we share how prayer has sustained us, or the various types of prayer that are meaningful in our own lives.

TO DO » Who has walked with you, guiding you in new awarenesses of God in your life? Thank them today.

TO PRAY » *Ever-present God, lead me in this catechetical journey with so many others. Help me to be a witness and guide.*