

## Taken from the Catechist Guidelines

To be a catechist is to share in the task given to the first apostles to tell the world about God's love.

*'The Church awakens and discerns this divine vocation and confers the mission to catechize'  
(General Directory for Catechesis 231)*

Confirmation catechists are sent to young people (usually). They invite young people to an encounter with Jesus Christ because they have themselves experienced his love.

*'The Word, who is life –  
this is our subject.  
That life was made visible:  
we saw it and we are giving our testimony,  
telling you of the eternal life  
which was with the Father and has been made visible to us.  
What we have seen and heard  
we are telling you....' (1 John 1:1-3)*

### The Confirmation Catechist

What would be the qualities of a Confirmation catechist? They are people of faith and love; people who love young people and are willing to listen to them and share their journey of faith; they are people of generous service.

*'For outstanding human and Christian qualities in the catechist will be able to do more to produce successes than will the methods selected... The work of the catechist must be considered of greater importance than the selection of texts and other tools.'*

*(General Catechetical Directory 71)*

Perhaps catechists do not think they have the 'outstanding' qualities required. Yet what catechists 'echo' to young people is that when God sends us we are sufficient.

Confirmation catechesis takes us into the on-going process of youth ministry. It provides a great opportunity to gather young people and to help them to take another step on their faith journey. It calls us to walk with young people, to listen to them and to share our faith with them in a language that they can understand. Catechists will need to be open to talking about their own life of faith and encourage young people to do the same.

The General Directory of Catechesis calls strongly for an adaptation of catechesis to various age levels including that of young people:

*'The most successful catechesis will be laced into the very life situations of the young people themselves, taking into account their challenges, and employing them in their own formation...the language we use in addressing young people is vitally important to consider. The Church's jargon must be translated into their terms so they can meet Christ.'*

*(The General Directory of Catechesis in Plain English 184 Bill Huebsch)*

These words echo the call of Pope Paul VI to be faithful to the message of the Gospel and to be equally faithful to those to whom we communicate it:

*'Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life.'* (Evangelization in the Modern World 63)

Sessions need to be accessible to young people and use a variety of approaches including multi-media. Using videos makes sense in today's culture of television, films and internet. Young people are 'visual learners' and receptive to the impact of seeing the message rather than just hearing it. Using a video clip is simply using a creative tool of communication. Music is an equally powerful tool and a short well-chosen video clip or song can lead effectively into a small group discussion, or a time of prayer or reflection on a piece of scripture; it can be a starting point or a finishing point for a session.

Communication with candidates during the programme is also of great importance. Young people are accustomed to frequent reminders and updates and parental consent forms can ask for email addresses and mobile phone numbers.