

THE CATECHIST'S GUIDE

The Catechumenate - Resources

There are three basic options for the Catechumenate ...

- A. Extracts from the E-Quip Course (25 weeks);
- B. Fr John Peck's Catechism Videos (20 weeks)
- C. "The Way" Course (this is at a much more elementary level (12 weeks).

These (above) are optimal lengths of the respective course options; but both the Catechist and the Catechumen can agree to a longer time frame to consider the material if this is preferred.

If a shorter time frame is indicated for existing knowledge, understanding and experience then this will either be decided by the Parish Priest at the outset, or subsequently upon the recommendation of the appointed Catechist.

Note: Some Catechumens with limited reading or English skills might be better served with Option B or C. Anyone with dyslexia? Please refer to Oana who will advise you on how to deliver the Course.

Course Options

You will find below three **Options** with their **Resource links** which you should bear in mind when assessing your Catechumen's needs. All Catechumens will be assessed first by the Parish Priest as to which Course might best suit them. He does this (in part) by the use of a Diagnostic Form, completed by the Catechumen, from which he will choose the most appropriate Course.

As with all educational processes, differentiation is the key principle in choosing the correct content and deliver method (see also Multiple Intelligences Theory):

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/multiple-intelligences.html>)

All candidates should have comparable Course achievements, but experience shows that there will be many differing levels of understanding that express those achievements.

OPTION A

This is the "gold standard" Course which allows for both Advanced and Intermediate content delivery. The 25-week Course is based on a selection of E-Quip Talks and Slides, suitably modified for the Catechumenate. The adapted Course Schedule will be issued by the Parish Priest after completion of the Diagnostic Form.

OPTION B

<https://www.orthodox.net.nz/onlinecatechism> This is Fr John Peck's Catechumenate video series at an intermediate level. Transcript summaries are available for the talks, but these must not be used by the Catechumen in place of watching each video with its much fuller content.

OPTION C

“The Way Course” is a simpler Course for those with limited reading ability. The talks themselves are far too “wordy” but the Handouts are good on their own for both teaching and discussion. The Catechist will be able to expand the content by reading the talks themselves. Here is the link to the Handouts: [Handouts](#)

Orthopraxy, Living the Orthodox Christian Life

Orthopraxy must support and express Orthodoxy so these are some extra YouTube resources you may find useful in the Catechumenate:

When in Church - signing with the cross, veneration, metanoias, prostrations etc	https://youtu.be/jSUJ5FOOdkg?si=T_ZWcuGs0whC7PeZ
Preparing ourselves by prayer and fasting for the Sacraments	https://youtu.be/Pi2J6mAT9ll?si=ScVqQIXedGZQTOak
Prayers and Blessings	https://youtu.be/F4GTpFSvHdo?si=LKDPBGN6epvcJoyF
The Domestic Church	https://youtu.be/CVXnvL4qqUU?si=SLWho5WaJy0LX-2F

Here is the link to my YouTube channel where these and other videos may be found, particularly three on baptism itself: <https://www.youtube.com/@GregoryHallam>

The Catechumenate – Process and Responsibilities

When anyone approaches the Church with a view to becoming an Orthodox Christian, we must strongly encourage an exploration of our faith and life first in both a prayerful and active participation (not just reading). This will also **usually** be when they have been regularly attending church for at least 3 months – although there can be exceptions to this rule.

When the **Explorer** is convinced that he or she wishes to become a **Catechumen**, the Parish Priest will design the **Course** based on their feedback in the Diagnostic Form and his perception of their existing spiritual progress and knowledge. At this point it will become clear whether **Baptism** is in view (the default) or **Chrismation** (the economic option) based on strict criteria concerning a previous ‘baptism’. The Parish Priest will investigate what evidence exists of any “regular” baptism outside the Orthodox Church. The bishop will decide in difficult cases.

The first step is for the candidate is to be **Enrolled** as a Catechumen, usually immediately before the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

The next stage is when a member of the **Catechist Team** takes over the **Course delivery**. Ordinarily, no Catechist should be assigned to more than **2 Catechumens** at any one time ... although an overlap of a 2 or 3 weeks with 3 might be acceptable depending on personal circumstances and commitments. Later in the process of the Catechumenate, one of the confessor priests will have a separate session with the Catechumen in preparation for the **Life Confession** and, of course, subsequent confessions.

It is the Catechist's responsibility to:

1. Pray for the Catechumen throughout the Course and afterwards.
2. Discern with the Catechumen how long the Course should be, with the basic minimum of 25 weeks (Option A), 20 weeks (Option B) and 12 weeks (Option C). Option A can be shortened in the light of existing understandings and the two shorter Courses can be extended at your discretion. The decision concerning Course length concerns the Catechumen, the Catechist and the Parish Priest.
3. Instruct through explanation and discussion the Course material, encouraging, where possible, reading ahead to the following session.
4. Collect the data as required by either the Baptism or Chrismation Form, giving it to the Parish Priest as soon as possible - it may not be complete as to the Saint's name and Sponsor.
5. If no Orthodox Sponsor is available from the Catechumen's family or friends then a parish member (or someone else from another Orthodox parish) that they know, trust and relate to well can take over that role. Before this person is approached, however, the Catechist should seek the Parish Priest's blessing. If no appropriate parish member is available, then the Catechist should take over that role.

Thank you for your ministry and service as a Catechist in this parish.

Fr Gregory

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