

# SOW-REAPP™ for Catechists

To assist you in the exploration and discernment of important topics or situations across the lifespan, we offer a two-stage process and method of discernment called SOW-REAPP (Silence, Openness, Waiting—Receive, Examine, Assimilate, Pray, Plan). Incorporating four areas of formation: spiritual, intellectual, human and apostolic, SOW encourages guided self-examination, beginning with a time of silent reflection, and culminating with waiting for a response from both God and perhaps an intended *other*. When SOW has been completed, you will then move to the REAPP stage of the process (see back of this page) which encourages you to embrace the gift God is giving you in this moment.

## SILENCE

## OPENNESS

## WAITING

Every year in our parishes the person responsible for religious education puts out a desperate call for catechists to help out with teaching the children more about Jesus. Typically they will ask a question, “Are you called to be a catechist?” but most of our parishes have no tools to help you answer that question nor the other questions that go with it. Am I prepared for it? Do I need to learn more about God’s word or the teachings of the Church? Am I willing to be dedicated to the work that it will take to do this well?

### **(S)ilence- Time to clear away the distractions of the world from our minds.**

If you have not spent time reflecting on who you are, you cannot know where you are going, what your purpose is, or why it matters. The call to be a catechist is one of the most important roles in the Church. Taking time in silence can help us see ourselves as we really are. You can take a look at your strengths and weaknesses and consider your life’s path and where God may be calling you. If you are honest, you will come to know your wants, needs, joys, sorrows, and the deepest longings of your own heart. You can come to terms with your brokenness and weakness in this moment, and be more clear about the gifts and virtues which are your strengths.

*How/Why did you come to this place? Who are you as a person? What are your hopes, dreams, desires? Take time to examine your conscience. Consider your virtues and failings.*

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### **(O)penness-Vulnerability to the other.**

With this increased self-awareness, you can consider a potential calling more honestly. Many people take an honest look at themselves and say, “I don’t know enough,” “I can’t speak well,” or even, “I don’t like the people I’d be teaching.” If you find yourself saying these things, you’ll find yourself among the ranks of people like Moses, St. Paul, and the Prophet Jonah. None of these are required to follow God’s call. Ultimately, I just need to ask the question, “Where am I in my relationship with Jesus Christ

and am I open to sharing that with others?” Christ has given us himself as a gift. Am I open to receive Him more deeply so that we can share the full meaning of relationship with him in the classroom?

*Consider how willing and able you are to be vulnerable and open to the work of the Spirit. You may be open in some areas and not in others. How open or closed are you in this moment?*

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### **(W)aiting- Preparation for an intimate encounter with the other.**

Intimacy develops over time. Sacred Scripture is filled with times of waiting for the Lord to come to his people. He comes and goes at his own appointed time, often waiting for us to be properly prepared for his coming. This period of waiting offers time for prayer, adoration and reception of the sacraments. It may also mean letting go of certain obstacles in our lives. Once these obstacles are cleared away, we can receive what God offers us more completely. We are making ourselves ready for change and deepening our capacity to receive Him.

*What things are filling my time and energy and keeping me from having time for the higher things? What is the experience of waiting like for you? Do you have a sense of being prepared to receive something or someone in a new way?*

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# RECEIVE EXAMINE ASSIMILATE PRAY PLAN

Having completed the SOW stage with time committed to discernment, remember the topic or situation you decided to explore. You are now invited to begin the REAPP stage of the process. We know from the writings of the saints that receiving the other has much greater meaning when intentional time is given to reflect on the experience and enter a relationship with Jesus Christ more fully. The REAPP process builds on the teachings of the saints to help you grow in holiness.

## (R)eceive- Openly encountering the other.

Wondering why God isn't speaking to you without opening your bible is like wondering why no one calls when your phone is off the hook. At this point in the process, we hope you are prepared to receive a gift or calling in a new way. To this end, we suggest that you open up a Bible and reflect on a few of the following passages in Sacred Scripture as you discern where God is leading you right now:

- 1Peter 4:8-11      Ex 4:10-17      1Cor 12:1-31
- Jonah 1            2Cor12:9-10    Prov 1:2-33
- Ex 35:30-35      1Peter 2:9      Gen 12:1
- Rom 9:19-27    2Thes 1:11      Jer 1:4-10

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## (E)xamine-Time to reflect on what is received.

Taking time to examine what God has given to you in the scriptures in a deeper way is an important part of the process. While experience is a great teacher, her lessons are typically forgotten without time spent reflecting on the experience.

*To that end, we recommend the Ignatian process of Examen. Place yourself in the presence of God. Be aware that He is with you now as He was in the midst of your experience reading the scriptures. Even a painful experience can be a moment of grace where God is intimately with us. Remember the experience with gratitude. Ask the Holy Spirit to assist you in going more deeply in the examination of the experience. Remember your emotions during the experience. These can help to show us where we responded or were moved to respond to an experience and can help us to see more clearly the moment of encounter with God.*

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## (A)ssimilate- Understanding and integration of one's own story with the story of salvation history.

In Christianity, the term *metanoia* is often used to express a life-changing moment. This involves an intentional turning away from one path in life and intentionally walking toward another.

***Remembering a profound image from the scriptures you experienced, name one change you intend to make in your life right now based on that experience.***

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## (P)ray- Modeling and practice of prayer

Prayer helps you discern the next right step in the presence of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit. Giving voice to the desires of your heart and mind in prayer may not come easily. It is important to pray alone and in community. Consider the many resources available to assist you, including your parish priest and staff, friends and family. You are always welcome to contact the Center for Family Life Formation for assistance at any stage of marriage and family life.

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## (P)lan- Develop practical steps to change one's life in accord with this new experience.

No change in direction can take place unless you actually take steps to make that happen. The Gospels repeatedly tell us it is easy to begin a new path, but difficult to complete the journey. A good plan, grounded in prayer, discipline and accountability, is helpful in overcoming any obstacle in your life.

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