

PPC Discussion Document 2¹

Sharing Faith With Children

Step 1: Examine the present reality in our parish

- In what ways do we create a sense of welcome for children at Saturday Evening / Sunday Morning Mass?
- How do we support young parents who have a child for baptism?
- How does the parish complement the work of the schools in the faith formation of children?

Step 2: Take time to reflect

The 'primary and natural responsibility'² for children's education belongs to their parents / guardians. 'Parents, and those who take their place, have both the obligation and the right to educate their children:³ They have a vital part to play within the educating community. So, too, parents / guardians take on the principal role in the faith formation of their children, introducing them to Jesus and preparing them for the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. It is true that many parents today feel the need for support in this role, having become unfamiliar with what it asks of them, or even alienated from the institutional Church. However, they do not have to take this duty on alone; they do so with their wider family and within their parish community. They are supported by the priests of the parish, by other parents / guardians and by those who participate in the planning and programming of parish catechesis. Sharing faith with the young is the work of the whole Christian community, a responsibility it is happy to undertake and to invest its energy in. Adult Catholics recognise that in this conversation, children, too, can be an inspiration to them, opening adults to fresh ways of seeing life, love and relationships, with one another and with God and, thereby, coming to understand their own faith anew⁴.

¹ This discussion document has been developed by The Pastoral Renewal Team of the Kerry Diocese and is shared with the Parish Pastoral Councils of the Elphin Diocese with permission.

² Taken from: Congregation For Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the third Millennium*, Holy See, 1997.

³ Code of Canon Law (1983) # 793.

⁴ Taken from: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*, Veritas, Dublin, 2011, p. 131.

Step 3: Explore various options

Having looked at the reality of how we nurture the faith of children in our parish and taken time to reflect on what Share the Good News suggests, explore the various possibilities of how our parish could enhance children's experience of faith.

Step 4: Identify specifications

- Informed by the discussion and reflection, identify specific actions that we could carry out in order to share faith with the children of the parish;
- If no action has been agreed, identify what further research is needed.

Step 5: When the action is completed, take time to review it by exploring:

- Did the action achieve its purpose?
- What was not effective?
- Is there a follow-up action needed?