



SPRED CORE TRAINING 2 - 1

Day 2

SPRED Roles and Standards

- Responsibilities of each Role
- Standards for SPRED Centers
- The Importance of Liturgy

Revelation and Personal Faith

- The call, how God is revealed and our response

Catechist Preparation Session

- Elements of the catechist preparation session
- An experience of a catechist preparation session



SPRED
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT
ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

ROLES IN A SPRED CENTER

Each person in the catechist community assumes a role in order to share the responsibility for the ministry of SPRED. Each commits him/herself to participate in all catechist preparation session and to be present for each total community session.

SPRED supports catechist communities by providing training courses, catechetical materials for each of the four age groups, reflection weekends, and opportunities for observation of catechesis, publications, animation (witness) and coordination.

The Parish Chairperson

- Discovers who in the parish or local church needs SPRED services
- Prepares a place for the community to gather for catechesis
- Recruits adults to become catechists
- Communicates with the pastor and other church leaders, with parents, family members and other care givers
- Encourages catechists to participate in training courses, observation and SPRED Family Liturgies.
- Animates neighboring parishes to secure new SPRED chairpersons
- Collaborates with other chairpersons in the deanery
- Is a helper catechist in the SPRED faith community

The Leader Catechist

- Leads catechist preparation sessions
- Leads the total community sessions
- Prepares the environment of the celebration room
- Participates in preparation with the total community and leads the agape
- Communicates with parents and parent figures
- Collaborates with parish/church leaders in view of worship

The Activity Catechist

- Prepares the environment of the meeting room
- Guides the total community during the time of preparation
- Leads the silence activity
- Coordinates the table setting and preparation, etc. for the agape
- Helps all to feel comfortable with the preparation process
- Participates in the celebration of each session
- Guides the clean-up process for each session

The Helper Catechist

- Relates specially to one person in the community
- Models: an attitude of welcome
 - a desire to become prepared
 - a desire to listen
 - confidence in the process
 - a sense of joy
- Supports the process by personal involvement e.g., sharing one's life experience and welcoming the Word



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SPRED STANDARDS

There are seven standards in SPRED designed to ensure consistency and the quality of catechesis offered in the program.

1. Availability

Religious services shall be available to the person with developmental disabilities.

Usually the person with disabilities who enters a **SPRED** group has membership in a parish or church. By sponsoring a **SPRED** group, the parish or church makes religious services available. The parish or church indicates its sponsorship by appointing a chairperson.

The work of the chairperson is to locate persons with disabilities in the parish, locate workers to join the group, sees to it that the workers (catechists) receive **SPRED** training, and arrange for the use of appropriate space. Through a chairperson, **SPRED** services become available to the person with disabilities.

2. Preparation for Catechesis

There shall be a preparation phase to each session with persons with developmental disabilities or learning problems.

The person with disabilities is welcomed as a guest as soon as he or she arrives.

The prepared environment fosters a sense of belonging, well-being and concentration.

The activity catechist assumes responsibility for the overall preparation phase.

3. Catechesis with Persons with Disabilities

There shall be a symbolic catechesis appropriate to the age, mentality, and faith development of the group.

The leader catechist assumes responsibility for the catechesis given. A prepared environment and the attitude of the adults foster a sense of the sacred, prayerful awareness and an attitude of celebration in a community of faith.

4. Closure

The session shall be brought to a gradual conclusion through the sharing of food.

Sharing of food in an atmosphere of the sacred has significance. A well prepared table involving everyone's contribution is a shared gift. Flowers, candles, attractive table coverings, quality tableware, dishes, etc., form the elements that convey respect, trust, and affection. Music expresses and deepens the group's happiness in becoming a community of faith.

With the coordination of the activity catechist, all members participate in the preparation, sharing of food, and cleaning up. The good-byes are to be respectful and personal.

5. Catechist Preparation Session

Each session with persons with disabilities shall be preceded by a catechist preparation session.

An adult community of believers gathers together to renew its own appreciation in faith of the mystery to be celebrated in the session with the total community. United in their experience of faith, through a symbolic method, they form a warm, welcoming community. Catechist preparation sessions take place on a day or evening other than that for the session with persons with disabilities. The session closes with the sharing of food.

Helper catechists (sponsors) make up the majority of the adult group. The helper is primarily a friend of a person with disabilities.

6. Liturgy - Worship

Liturgical experiences with specialized groups shall take place from time to time, but inclusion into assemblies of worship in the local parish or church is to be fostered.

Catechists, families and persons with developmental disabilities are invited to participate and to assist in the preparation of SPRED family liturgy which takes place at the SPRED Chapel. Modeling a form of liturgy that enhances the possibility for participation for persons with developmental disabilities facilitates the replication of such liturgy in parishes through the work of catechist communities.

7. Area Coordination

There shall be coordination between centers in a given area. Chairpersons gather annually to share and plan for growth and expansion of SPRED ministry.



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REVELATION

ONE SPEAKS - THE CALL

*SUMMONS
CONTENT
UNFOLDING PERSONALITY*



FAITH

THE OTHER RESPONDS - THE RESPONSE

*TRUST
LOVE
ADHERENCE*

REVELATION

I. **What is revelation?**

It is God's free action of communicating the saving truth to us, especially through Jesus Christ... accepted by the Apostolic Church... attested to by the Bible and the continuing community of believers.

II. **Why?**

We need to free ourselves as catechists from a narrow view of Revelation as items to be believed or as a mystery that is totally unknowable. As catechists we want to understand the ways God is manifest in the life of each person with and without disabilities.

III. **Resource? Models of Revelation by Avery Dulles 1983**

MODEL	FORM	CONTENT	RESPONSE	OUR FRIENDS
Doctrine	Ideas, propositions, divinely authoritative doctrine proposed as God's Word	Scripture and Apostolic tradition	Our firm assent to revealed truths in the authoritative sources	
History	Historical deeds and events	God's great deeds, especially the death and resurrection of Jesus	Our trust and hope in God whose power, goodness and fidelity we trust	
Inner	Mystical: God's intimate presence in the depths of the human spirit	Direct; an unmediated encounter; an interior experience	Spiritual attitude and outlook	!
Dialectical Presence	Whenever God's word is effectively proclaimed and received	God's free act in Jesus; a mysterious meeting with God in faith	We are open to revelation, personal obedience, formal assent	!
New Awareness (Symbol)	Higher level of consciousness	All one's life experience	A new world of meaning open to interpretation /participation	!!

*“REVELATION never occurs in a purely interior experience
or an unmediated encounter with God.
It is always mediated through
an externally perceived sign
that works mysteriously on the human consciousness
so as to suggest more than it can clearly describe or define.”*

A. Dulles

IV. Why symbolic catechesis?

Symbol is available to persons with intellectual, emotions and developmental challenges because it is knowing by indwelling. It is an interpretive process by which we know something as our own. It is participatory knowledge... our friends' most comfortable way of learning: it is intuitive and open to mystery.

Symbol provides access to a spiritual, unseen reality and goes beyond the barrier of language. It is never a sheer object but an environment to be inhabited.

Symbol incorporates what is sound in all the models of Revelation.

Our Catechist Preparation Sessions (CPS) and Total Community Session (TCS) reflect all models of Revelation in our prayer experiences together.

Revelation

How can God reveal Himself interpersonally through creation?
Distinguish between Objective Knowledge and Participatory Knowledge

Mystery means

Either

The incomprehensible reality of the revealing God

Or

The plan of the god who speaks (Revelation)

Or

The encounters, meeting with, the points of contact with God (sacraments)

The human who responds

Fact - Intellectual Act

Summons - Adherence of the will (Trust)

Unfolding of Person - Love

Symbolic Knowledge or Participatory Knowledge

Is available to the disabled person

Is an interpretive process by which we know something as our own

Is knowing by indwelling, i.e., it does not understand realities from without, through sheer spectator knowledge

It understands only from within insofar as we appreciate and rely on these realities

So a symbol

Speaks to us in It understands only from within insofar as it lures us to recognize ourselves

with the meaning it opens up to us.

Is never a sheer object, not an object to be manipulated but an environment to be inhabited

Is a place to live, a breathing space with open ended possibilities, a hut of meaning

MODELS OF REVELATION

by Avery Dulles, S.J. 1983

1. REVELATION AS DOCTRINE: Supernatural revelation is given in the form of words having a clear propositional content and that such revelation is necessary for salvation, since it enables us to know about God's saving dispensation in Jesus Christ, and thus, as the Neo-scholastics put it, to choose apt means to our last end. Revelation is identical with the prophetic-apostolic deposit committed to the Church. This deposit consists of the canonical scriptures and Catholic Neo-Scholasticism adds, Tradition, which both supplements and interprets the Bible. Thrived from Vatican Council I (1870) through modernism (1907-10) to *Humani Generis* (1950)

Faith is a firm assent to the revealed truths contained in the authoritative sources – both for evangelical Protestantism and the Catholic Church.

2. REVELATION AS HISTORY: The content is the great deeds of God in history or events which, seen in their mutual connection, manifest God as the Lord and goal of history. The form of revelation is primarily that of deeds or events, especially the climactic events of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, in the light of which the previous history of revelation in God's dealing with Israel is at once confirmed and reinterpreted.

The appropriate response unwavering trust and hope in the God who has conclusively show his power, goodness and fidelity to his promise.

3. REVELATION AS INNER EXPERIENCE: The form is an immediate interior experience. For most authors this consists in a direct, unmediated encounter with the divine, although some affirm, with the Biblical and Christian tradition that this experience is to be found in communion with the prophets and especially with Jesus, whose familiarity with God was unsurpassably intimate. This faith possesses a kind of "mediated immediacy". The content is neither information about the past nor abstract doctrinal truth. Rather the content is God as he lovingly communicates himself to the soul that is open to him.

The appropriate response to revelation is a "religious attitude and outlook: - not an adherence to a definite body of truth nor a commitment to a particular course of action.

4. REVELATION AS DIALECTICAL PRESENCE: Its proper form is revelation comes through Christ the Word in person. Nothing finite is revelation except insofar as the Word speak through it. The Bible is not revelation itself but rather the primary witness to the revelation which is Christ. But the word of scripture cannot be equated with the word of God. In a secondary way, Church proclamation bears witness to Christ. Revelation is not just a doctrine about salvation but a saving transaction.

The response is faith-firstly, personal obedience and only secondarily a matter of formal assent.

5. REVELATIONS AS NEW AWARENESS: The form of revelation is that of a breakthrough into a more advanced stage of human consciousness; the self is experienced as constituted and empowered by the divine presence. Revelation has no fixed content. Past events are revelation only insofar as they have illuminative power for the present. So continuous reinterpretation.

The process of revelation completes itself when it terminates in the new consciousness which is faith – greater integration, freedom and self-possession.

MODELS OF FAITH

The Assurance of Things Hoped For – a Theology of Christian Faith

by Avery Dulles, S.J. 1994

1. PROPOSITIONAL MODEL: People who look on faith as an ascent to revealed truths on the authority of God, the revealer. “What is revealed and believed must be a sentence.”
2. TRANSCENDENTIAL MODEL: Faith is not or primarily, an acceptance of particular revealed truth. More importantly, it is a new cognitive horizon, a divinely given perspective that enables one to see and assent to truths that would otherwise not be accepted. Faith is constituted not so much by an acceptance of specific revealed truths as by a grace-given and freely accepted, dynamism of the human spirit toward God as the only adequate object of its desire and love. (Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan)
3. FIDUCIAL MODEL: A school of thought, characteristically Protestant, moves away from the intellectualism of the first two positions and identifies faith more closely with trust. Faith as a trusting surrender always has to do with the future. Faith is called to life by promise and is therefore essentially hope, confidence, and trust in the God who will not lie but will remain faithful to his promise. Knowledge is not yet faith (Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Pannenberg)
4. AFFECTIVE-EXPERIMENTAL MODEL: a school of thought, emphasizing the affective component in faith and the close connection between faith and experience, (Blaise Pascal, Pseudo-Dionysius, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards and Edward Schillebeeckx), those who made much of the “reasons of the heart”, i.e. the full assurance of faith requires a perception of the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.
5. OBEDIENTIAL MODEL: emphasizes obedience – it may be Pauline for he mentions 3 times the “obedience of faith”. (Matthias Sheeben exemplifies this tendency as does Karl Barth and somewhat Rudolf Bultman) Beginning with a certain kind of knowledge, faith defers to Christ as Lord and leads to confession, a third aspect of faith. The principal aspect, however, is seen as the 2nd; the obedient act of acknowledgement and compliance
6. PRAXIS MODEL: found in some European political theology and in contemporary liberation theology, notably in Latin America, “Praxis” is taken from Karl Marx for whom it has a technical meaning. It refers to human activities that are directed to overcoming the alienation in present-day society. Christian faith is seen as a “subversive memory” that recalls the freedom of Jesus. (Joann Baptist Metz, Gustavo Gutierrez)
7. PERSONALIST MODEL: This group objects that it is too restrictive to define faith in terms of powers, faculties and specific modes of action. They would prefer to define faith in terms of a new personal relationship conferring a mode of life and being. Maurice Blondel: “If faith unites us to the life of a subject introduces us by loving thought into another thought and live, it is the most realistic form of knowing. (Jean Mouroux, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar) “Faith is nothing but the believer’s whole existence as buried and rising along with Christ.’



CATECHIST PREPARATION SESSION

Standard 5

Each session with persons with disabilities shall be preceded by a catechist preparation session. An adult community of believers gathers together to renew its own appreciation in faith of the mystery to be celebrated in the session with the total community. United in their experience of faith, through a symbolic method, they form a warm, welcoming community. Catechist preparation sessions take place on a day or evening other than that for the session with persons with disabilities. The session closes with the sharing of food.

Catechist Prep Session Begin with:

- Greetings and Welcome
- Respect and consideration for others.
- A willingness to be open, to be present, to share, to listen and communicate appropriately, a desire to build community
- Each catechist's contribution toward the growth and strengthening of the group

Begins with any business which could entail:

Fundraising information, Parish Information, Upcoming Events, Housekeeping matters, etc.

I Introduction

- a. Feedback is a way for the catechist community to share observations about the previous session, identify problems or difficulties and together find possible solutions or ideas to trial in future sessions. Each catechist is encouraged to respond.

Feedback from the previous session should cover in order of importance.

A review of the sharing in the celebration room.

Did we meet the goal of the session?

Was the symbol strong so that each Friend could connect?

Could something else maybe have worked better?

Preparation Process

Was everyone engaged in an activity?

Was help needed?

Focus on ways to ensure friends are comfortable.

- b. The goal of the current session is revealed with an explanation of the intention of the session and it's relation to the mystery being explored in this particular year.

II Initiation into the Sign of the Mystery

Literary Selection is read stirring thought and feeling. The selection becomes part of the symbolic process in place of an object, piece of art, music that will be used in the Total Community Session.

III Deepening into the Sign of the Mystery

a. Interiorization

1. A summary of the selection is read and ends with a sentence that makes a statement about the story. A question is posed about that statement, the intentionality of the session. The catechists are asked to reflect and recall an experience in their own life that responds to the question and relates to the goal of the session. The story sparks an idea that we connect with but move on from.

2. Silent Reflection

The lights are turned down; quiet music plays in the background. Each catechist finds a comfortable spot to become lost in their own recollections. Time is taken to reflect on our own personal life experience that resonates most strongly with the intention and goal. In preparing to share, our focus is on the emotional level of the event rather than the history of it.

b. Liturgical Evocation

1. Sharing

When we gather in the celebration circle, we are invited to share our recollections that relate to the Goal of the session. Each one offering their story as a gift to the community. The sharing is left in the room and not commented on later to build trust and comfort in authentically reflecting on our lives.

2. A liturgical experience is recalled that will also be used for the Total Community. The liturgical experience is one that carries the same feeling evoked by the question from the story summary and intentionality of the session.

c. Biblical Evocation

The scripture reading is the same as will be proclaimed for the Total Community

d. Message

The same Message is given as will be given to the Total Community

e. Personal Expression

The song that will also be used for the Total Community reflects peace, thanksgiving, praise, joy or hope. It is first fully listened to and then sung with gesture conveying the meaning and feeling of the song in the deepest way possible.

All sit down. Reflection music is played to allow the group time to savor the moment, the feeling and the peace in being together.

The same as will be done with the Total Community.

IV RELATIONSHIP OF THE CATECHIST PREPARATION SESSION TO THE TOTAL COMMUNITY SESSION

By exploring the mystery for themselves, the catechists are ready to discuss the session ahead with their Friends. What object, piece of music, photo, artwork – painting or sculpture, would best become symbolic in the total community session and help their friends open up to the intentionality of the session and unveil the mystery of God's love.

Each catechist has relevant input to add specific to their knowledge of their own Friend and observation of other Friends. With the input of the group, the leader is responsible for procuring whatever item is needed.

AGAPE – SPRED Standard 4

Agape is celebrated with the same respect and reverence as it is with the Friends. *Sharing of food in an atmosphere of the sacred has significance. A well prepared table involving everyone's contribution is a shared gift. Flowers, candles, attractive table coverings, quality tableware, dishes, etc., form the elements that convey respect, trust, and affection. A closing song expresses and deepens the group's happiness in becoming a community of faith.*