



# Catechesis of Children with Special Needs

EMBRACE | ENGAGE | EMPOWER

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

### SESSION 1

#### **1A Classroom Management Techniques for Children with ADD/ADHD**

**Presenter:** Val Mara, Assistant Superintendent of Academics  
Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis  
Archdiocese of Hartford

*When the right strategies are put into place, children with ADD/ADHD can be very successful in a classroom environment. This workshop will explore techniques that will benefit not only children with ADD/ADHD, but all learners.*

#### **1B Cómo Orar con Niños y Jóvenes con Discapacidades**

**Presenter:** Esther García  
Manager, Programs and Outreach  
National Catholic Partnership on Disability

*Esther García hablará sobre las perspectivas teológicas, pastorales y prácticas de la oración con niños y jóvenes con discapacidades de moderadas a severas. Demostrará una catequesis simbólica que despierta una conciencia intuitiva de Dios y que conduce a la oración y al encuentro con Él.*

#### **1C Unpacking the USCCB Documents on People with Disabilities**

**Presenter:** Janice Benton  
Executive Director  
National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)

*Over the last thirty-nine years, three pastoral statements on people with disabilities along with the National Directory on Catechesis, have been published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This workshop will discuss the profound implications these documents have on how we create a culture of welcome and belonging in our parishes and especially in our faith formation programs.*

### **1D Understanding Autism**

**Presenter:** Paul LaCava, Ph. D.

Associate Professor, Department of Special Education

Rhode Island College

*Autism spectrum disorder can be challenging to understand. In this introductory workshop participants will learn about how the characteristics of autism impact learning, social interaction and behavior. A better understanding of autism is the first and most critical step in ministering to the faith needs of these children.*

### **1E Different Gifts, Same Spirit: Creating an Inclusive Parish Community**

**Presenter:** Carrie Freyer

Marketing Manager, Curricula

Sponsored by Loyola Press

*We all know how important it is to help people with special needs enter full participation in the Catholic faith—learning about their faith, developing their own relationship with God, participating in worship and liturgy, parish ministry, and Catholic social justice initiatives. But most of us are a bit unsure of how to make that happen. In this workshop, we'll discuss how to recognize and remove barriers to participation for individuals with intellectual, physical, emotional, and sensory differences. We will specifically explore how to help children and youth welcome all into their catechetical environments. Each participant will receive a copy of Different Gifts, Same Spirit, a guide to creating an inclusive learning community.*

### **1F Models of Inclusion in Faith Formation Programs**

**Presenters:**

Celia Lofink, Ph.D., St. Therese Church, Granby, iGift Program for Special Needs Faith Formation

Kathi Bonner, Director of Faith Formation, St. Catherine of Siena Church, Simsbury

*When it comes to teaching children with special needs the Catholic faith, there is no "one size fits all" approach. This workshop will explore a variety of models all of which work towards dynamic inclusion and successful learning.*

## SESSION 2

### **2A Taking Children with Special Needs to Mass**

**Presenter:** Gail Mikolsky

Director of Parish Support and Outreach

Saint Catherine Academy, Fairfield, CT

*Often parents of children with special needs find taking their child to mass challenging. Come and learn strategies and techniques that will help make liturgical participation more positive and successful. Techniques such as backward chaining, and utilizing Mass buddies will be discussed. This workshop will also include directions on how to make a "My Mass Book" for children with disabilities.*

### **2B La Revisión de las Directrices para la Celebración de los Sacramentos con Personas con Discapacidades. Una herramienta indispensable para el Catequista.**

**Presenter:** Esther Garcia

**Manager,** Programs and Outreach

National Catholic Partnership on Disability

*Daremos un repaso a los puntos sobresalientes de las Directrices para la Celebración de los Sacramentos con Personas con Discapacidades aprobada por la Conferencia de los Obispos.*

### **2C Strategies and Resources for Helping Children with Special Needs Prepare to Receive and Celebrate the Sacraments**

**Presenter:** Carrie Freyer

Marketing Manager, Curricula

Sponsored by Loyola Press

*Sacramental preparation is such a meaningful time for young children as well as their parents. In this workshop, we will explore best practices and strategies for helping children prepare to receive **and** celebrate the sacraments. We will unpack the **Adaptive Sacramental Preparation Learning Kits** from Loyola Press and discuss how they guide catechists and parents to help children meet the USCCB guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities. Additional resources and organizations that provide support will be shared as well.*

### **2D Strategies for Teaching Children with Autism and other Spectrum Disorders**

**Presenter:** Paul LaCava, Ph. D.

Associate Professor, Department of Special Education

Rhode Island College

*This workshop provides educators with practical tools to help students with autism learn, socially interact and regulate behavior. Participants will learn about a variety of strategies, supports and resources to use in their classrooms.*

## **2E Why Emotions Matter**

**Presenter:** Val Mara,  
Assistant Superintendent of Academics  
Office of Education, Evangelization and Catechesis  
Archdiocese of Hartford

*Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify and manage emotions. Understanding a child's emotional intelligence can have a profound effect on how learning takes place in the classroom. This workshop provides strategies for creating emotionally safe learning environments where students can develop confidence and grow academically and spiritually.*

## **SESSION 3**

### **3A Complete Faith Formation for Children with Autism and Other Special Needs:**

#### **It All Begins with the Child**

**Presenter:** Carrie Freyer  
Marketing Manager, Curricula  
Sponsored by Loyola Press

*Receiving the sacraments is a real milestone for all children, but especially those with autism and other special needs. But we must not stop there. The Catholic Church calls us to go further and provide ongoing faith formation opportunities for all of God's children. In this workshop, we will delve into the **Adaptive Finding God** faith formation program from Loyola Press. We will explore how the program employs best practices and strategies for working with children with disabilities and how each catechetical setting is served through the program. Practical strategies and tools will be shared to demonstrate how to build on children's strengths and meet their needs.*

### **3B Planeando nuestra clase para Niños y Jóvenes con Discapacidades**

**Presenter:** Esther Garcia  
Manager of Programs and Outreach, National Catholic Partnership on Disability

*Estrategias para atender las necesidades catequéticas de niños y jóvenes con discapacidades. Enfocado en la planeación de la lección, el manejo del salón, el ambiente y las adaptaciones a las actividades y recursos que ayudarán a niños y jóvenes a conocer su fe católica.*

### **3C Highlights of the Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, Revised Edition**

**Presenter:** Janice Benton

Executive Director, National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)

*This past June, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to ratify a revision of the Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, originally released in 1995. These updated guidelines emphasize the importance of including persons with disabilities fully into the sacramental life of the parish. Participants will learn how to utilize this incredibly helpful resource for your parish.*

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