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A JESUIT MINISTRY

Finding God

DIRECTOR GUIDE

QUICK
START

Finding God Director Quick-Start Guide is an expression of the work of Loyola Press, a ministry of the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus.

Cover design: Loyola Press
Cover Illustration: Rafael López
Interior design: Loyola Press

ISBN-13: 978-0-8294-3193-3
ISBN-10: 0-8294-3193-4

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LOYOLAPRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY
3441 N. Ashland Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(800) 621-1008

www.loyolapress.com
www.ignatianspirituality.com
www.other6.com

Printed in China

11 12 13 14 15 16 HY 6 5 4 3 2 1

Art Acknowledgments

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Welcome to Finding God

The duties of catechesis correspond to education of the different dimensions of faith, for catechesis is integral Christian formation, “open to all the other factors of Christian life”. (250) In virtue of its own internal dynamic, the faith demands to be known, celebrated, lived and translated into prayer. Catechesis must cultivate each of these dimensions. The faith, however, is lived out by the Christian community and proclaimed in mission: it is a shared and proclaimed faith. These dimensions must also be encouraged by catechesis.

General Directory for Catechesis 84

Your Role as Director of *Finding God*

At Baptism, you were entrusted with the light of Christ. Since then many people have nurtured your faith and helped you recognize and respond to God’s saving action in your life. As a catechetical director, you are now in the position to do the same for others.

Roles for catechetical directors vary from parish to parish and from diocese to diocese. The consistent challenge for those who direct parish or school catechetical programs is to provide leadership, support, and resources for those who have crucial roles in the faith formation program. *Finding God* recognizes and affirms all those involved in the faith formation of children, including

- parents
- families (the “domestic church”)
- catechists in both the parish and school setting
- the parish faith community

Finding God also affirms that you, as director, are called to support the people in these crucial roles and to enhance their abilities to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

First and foremost, you bring an alive and active baptismal spirituality to your ministry along with administrative and technical skills. You have the wonderful privilege of calling others to recognize and respond to God’s grace in their daily lives. Your parish or school has chosen *Finding God: Our Response to God’s Gifts* to assist you in your efforts to catechize all the members of your faith community. The program offers ample opportunities to include parishioners of all ages in faith formation.

May all that you do help others to recognize God’s presence in all things!

Using This Guide

Loyola Press developed *Finding God: A Response to God's Gifts* as a catechetical program that will serve as the foundation for whole parish catechesis. *Finding God* is rooted in Ignatian spirituality and encourages catechists and students to recognize the presence of God in all things and to develop a lifelong relationship with God. The program will help your entire parish open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit. This Director Quick-Start Guide provides you with the support and resources you need to implement and coordinate *Finding God* in your parish, in your school, or in both settings.

This guide contains nine simple steps to assist you in presenting *Finding God* to catechists, parents, and children in your parish community. It also shows how to use *Finding God* to enrich faith formation for all members of your parish community.

Step 1: Become Familiar with Finding God

Step 1 explains the vision of the program and guides you through the program components. It also provides ideas for working with catechists, parents, and families and introduces methods for whole-parish catechesis.

Step 2: Plan for the Year

Step 2 provides you with five different implementation models for *Finding God*. Each model is an effective, practical presentation of the program tailored to meet the varied needs of your parish community.

Step 3: Decide How to Open a Unit

Step 3 gives options for introducing each unit of *Finding God*. Options include traditional theme-focused opening activities as well as intergenerational events designed to include all members of your parish community.

Step 4: Plan a Communications Strategy

Step 4 describes ways to communicate, affirm, and encourage catechists and parents about classes, events, and presentations throughout the course of the program.

Step 5: Management Hints

Step 5 provides simple ideas for program implementation, planning, session organization, and catechist support and resources.

Step 6: Train and Transition Catechists

Step 6 offers a schedule and ideas for a catechist retreat day and workshop. Detailed plans for this are provided at www.findinggod.com.

Step 7: Introduce Parents to Finding God

Step 7 offers ideas for a parent meeting to begin the program. It also encourages and affirms parents as an integral part of the faith formation process. Detailed plans for this parent meeting and other ideas for at-home catechesis are available at www.findinggod.com.

Step 8: Introduce Children to Finding God

Step 8 kicks off the program with an opportunity for children to find God in all things. Children are introduced to the program and have an opportunity to become familiar with Ignatian spirituality and their *Finding God* books.

Step 9: Resources for Success

Step 9 provides resources for you and your catechists to make using *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts* an enriching and exciting faith formation experience.

Step 1: Become Familiar with Finding God

As program director, it is crucial for you to be completely familiar with *Finding God*. The Catechist Guide is the ideal starting point. Both the Parish Catechist Guide and the School Catechist Guide include an informative introductory section called Program Overview, which will provide you with a solid grasp of the vision, components, and features of *Finding God*. Before reading further in this Director Quick-Start Guide, take time to thoroughly read through the Program Overview section of any Catechist Guide (pages OV-4 through OV-23). This overview will provide you with an understanding of the following:

- the vision of the *Finding God* program
- components for adult faith formation and children's faith formation
- features of the Children's Book
- features of the Catechist Guide
- the catechetical process used in every session
- additional children's and catechists' resources

Program Components

CHILDREN'S BOOK

A simple, four-part lesson plan is easy to use and creates a pattern for learning and reflection at all grade levels.

Engage

Children think about a real-life experience and how they may have experienced God's presence. They move from the known in this step to the new in the next.

Explore

Children explore topics through reading, discussion, prayer, and activities.

Reflect

Children experience a variety of forms of prayer, reflection, and meditation that relate to the content of the session.

Respond

Children review content and share concepts with their families.



Celebrating the Liturgical Year

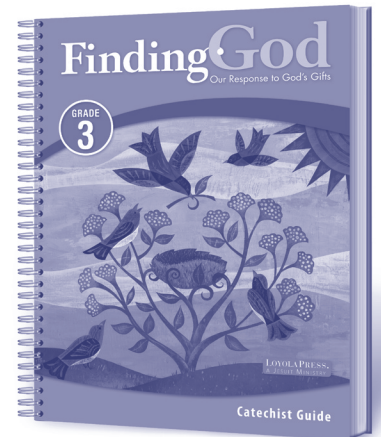
Celebrating Sessions are provided at the end of each unit. They follow the same lesson format but enhance faith formation by helping children connect to the celebration of Mass and sacramental life.

Seasonal Sessions

These sessions outline the liturgical calendar and offer lessons for major Church seasons: Ordinary Time, Advent, Christmas, Lent and Holy Week, Easter. These lessons can be presented at appropriate times throughout your faith formation program, especially in conjunction with the Celebrating Sessions.

CATECHIST GUIDE

An in-depth presentation of the program is provided in the Program Overview section of the Catechist Guide. The Effective Catechist section reinforces the role of the catechist and offers helpful tips and suggestions to affirm and support catechists as they prepare to present *Finding God*.



Session Highlights

Each unit begins with two Catechist Preparation pages that introduce the unit theme and summarize the unit. An outline of the prayer and the Catholic Social Teaching for the unit is also presented, along with a suggested piece of literature that is tied to the unit theme. Opportunities to unite parish and school are also provided in the *Together as One Parish* box.

You may choose to open each unit using the book or by hosting an intergenerational event using *Finding God Together*. In either case, children will learn about saints who are models of faith. The chosen saints exemplify the unit themes: God, Our Creator and Father; Jesus, Our Lord and Savior; The Church, Our Community in the Spirit; Sacraments, Our Way of Life; and Morality, Our Lived Faith.

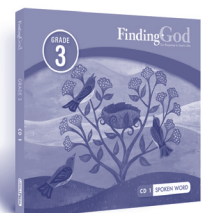
The following additional resources appeal to a variety of different learning styles, ages, and approaches:

EXPLORING FAITH THROUGH ART

Integrated into every session and woven into the Children's Book, the *Exploring Faith Through Art* easel and catechist instructions appeal to a variety of learning styles to enliven and enrich your program—without any need for technology.

FINDING GOD CDS

These CDs include hymns, reflective instrumental music, Scripture readings, and guided reflections that are woven into the session. These may also be used in a variety of ways to enhance whole-community catechesis.



WEB SITE

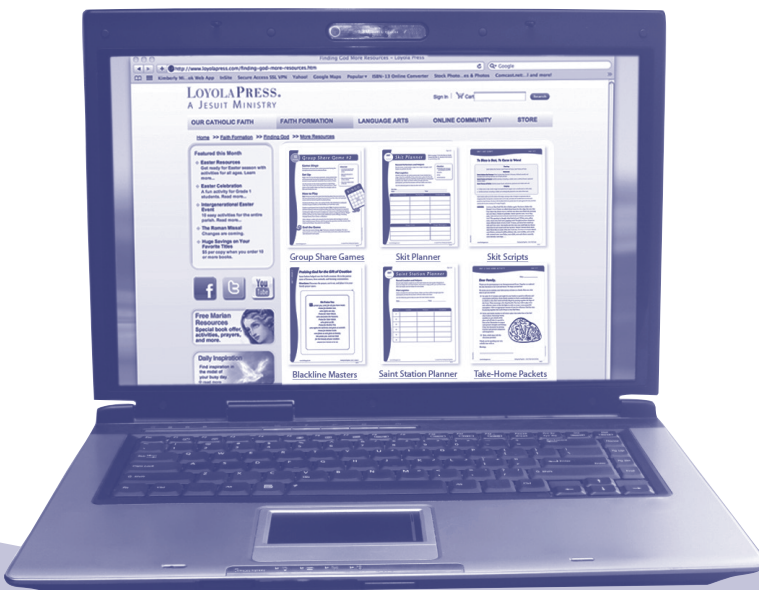
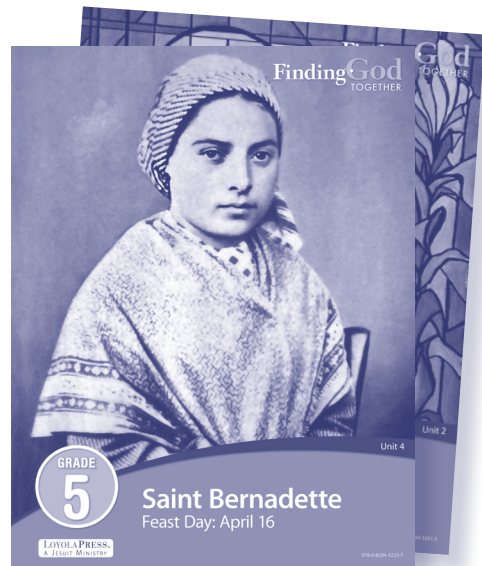
Our Web site www.findinggod.com is a resource for everyone involved in catechesis. The Web site provides support materials to help you, catechists, parents, and children enhance and extend *Finding God*, including activities, projects, planning and assessment tools, and Spanish resources, as well as interactive reviews and games for children.

FAITH MOVES

This is a new supplemental resource for catechists and families that reinforces the *Finding God* themes. Geared for families with children of all ages, this deck of discussion and activity cards makes family faith formation accessible and fun for everyone.

FINDING GOD TOGETHER: INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS KIT

This intergenerational events kit offers the resources needed to host five afternoons or evenings of faith formation for parishioners of all ages. These intergenerational gatherings are an alternate approach to the book-based unit openers. But *Finding God Together* is user friendly and available for any parish wishing to host intergenerational faith experiences.



Step 2: Plan for the Year

The implementation models on the following pages can be easily adapted to fit your own schedule. If you would like to customize your own model, you may wish to use the interactive Lesson Planner tool at www.findinggod.com.

Weekly sessions are held 20 to 32 times per year and range from 45 to 90 minutes. In addition to the following implementation models, an alternative 32-week model that includes assessments and seasonal sessions can be found on page EC-6 of the Effective Catechist section.

Implementation Model 1 below can be adapted depending on the length of your sessions. Each session provides many opportunities to pick and choose activities to fit the needs of your catechists. Features like IfTime Allows, Ideas to Share, Blackline Masters, and FYI are optional if your session time is limited to 45 minutes. Seasonal Sessions can be used at appropriate times during the liturgical year during class times or as part of whole-community catechesis events.

