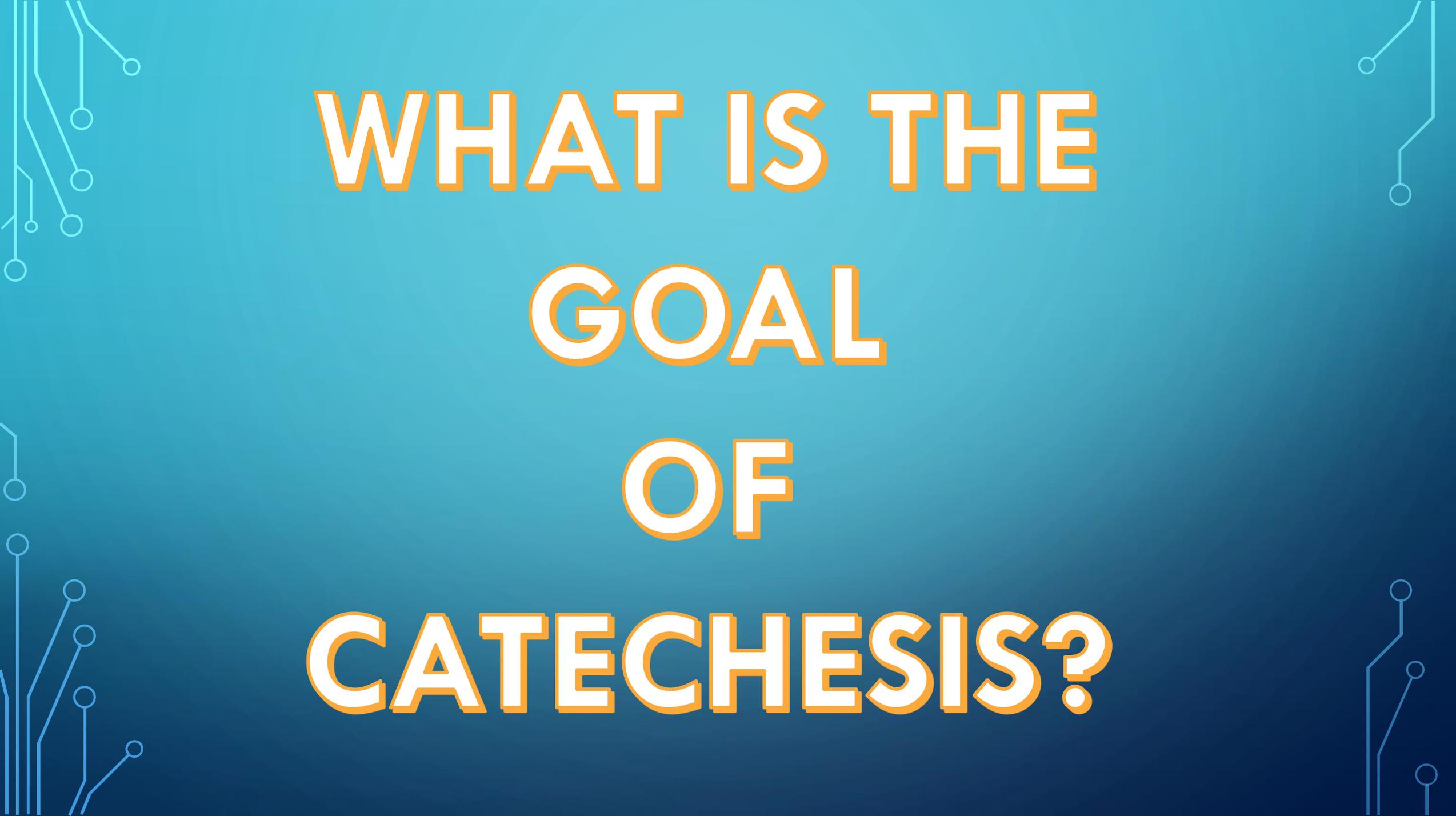


# ADULT FAITH FORMATION

...THE catechetical priority



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The background is a blue gradient with decorative white circuit-like lines in the corners. The text is centered and reads: 

# WHAT IS THE GOAL OF CATECHESIS?

# Six Tasks of Catechesis

[General Directory for Catechesis, 85-87; National Directory for Catechesis, 20]

1. Promote knowledge of the faith **THE GOAL OF CATECHESIS IS DISCIPLESHIP!**
2. Promote a meaningful understanding of and participation in worship and the sacramental life of the Church
3. Promote moral formation into the Christian way of life
4. Teach Christians how to pray with Christ, in Christ, and in communion with the Church
5. Initiate the Christian into the life of the community, fostering active participation in the life and mission of the Church
6. Promote a missionary spirit, witnessing Christ in society

# Formation: in and with Christ

- Catechesis must always be about forming persons in Christ – it is always less about something and more about someone (the truth we proclaim is a person!)

Leading others to  
Encounter JESUS!

CCC #1

- Discipleship (and evangelization!) necessarily involves lifelong formation and growth in our relationship with Jesus Christ

# Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

## Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States [Statement of the US Catholic Bishops, 1999]

- § 1 § We are filled with great joy and expectation as the third millennium of Christian history dawns. Before us, in the wonder of God's gracious plan, stretch new opportunities to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to all the world. We are eager to witness and share the word of life about the reign of God faithfully, so that each new generation can hear this word in its own accents and discover Christ as its Savior.

# Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

## Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States [Statement of the US Catholic Bishops, 1999]

- § 2 § Every disciple of the Lord Jesus shares in this mission.
- To do their part, adult Catholics must be mature in faith and well equipped to share the Gospel,
- promoting it in every family circle, in every church gathering, in every place of work, and in every public forum.
- They must be women and men of prayer whose faith is alive and vital, grounded in a deep commitment to the person and message of Jesus.

# Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States

[Statement of the US Catholic Bishops, 1999]

- § 3 § The Church's pastoral ministry exists to sustain the work of the Gospel. One way it does this is by nourishing and strengthening lay men and women in their calling and identity as people of faith, as contributors to the life and work of the Church, and as disciples whose mission is to the world. To grow in discipleship throughout life, all believers need and are called to build vibrant parish and diocesan communities of faith and service.

# Adult Faith Formation: **Making Contact**

- “Precisely because the principal content of adult catechesis is the revelation of the living God who saves human beings and helps them to realize their full potential, this catechesis must be **dynamic** and **relevant** so that adults, to their own satisfaction, can become gradually more aware of *their value and dignity as human beings*...”

- *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*,  
International Committee on Catechesis, 1990.

# Three Primary Goals of AFF

- ① Invite and Enable Ongoing Conversion to Jesus Christ
- ② Promote and support full and active membership and participation in the life of the Christian community
- ③ Empower believers, making them more willing and able to be Christian disciples in the world

# How do we do this...what should AFF look like?

- AFF cannot be episodic; it must have an organic development and be systematic and comprehensive
  - NO SHOT IN THE ARM APPROACH
  - OHWB points us to the example of Jesus in Lk 24
- Can I have a volunteer to read Luke 24:13-35?
  - What can we gain from the example of Jesus here for AFF? **(OHWB #7-11)**
  - See also *Living as Missionary Disciples, USCCB*

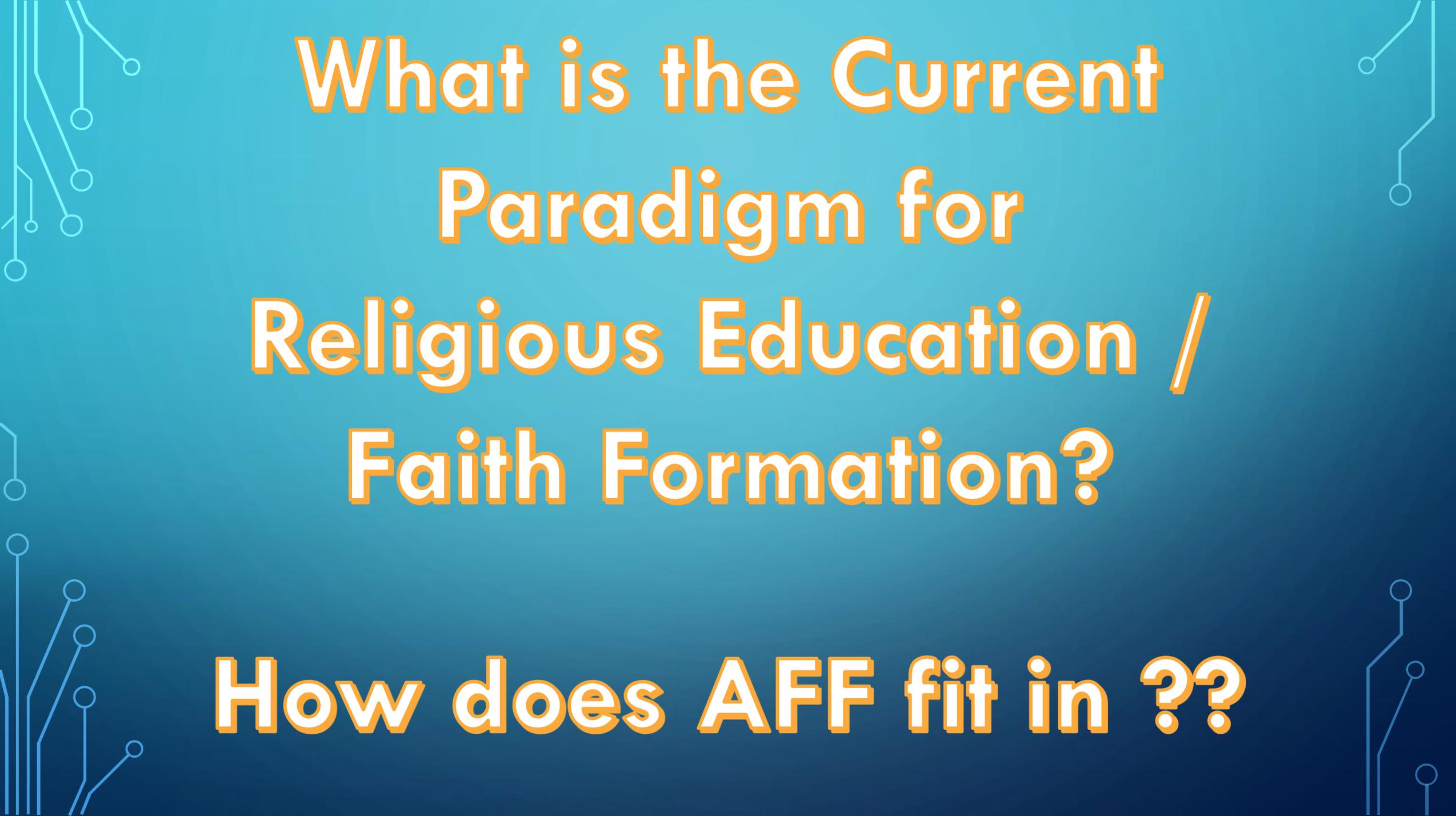
# ADULT FORMATION:

## THE PREFERENTIAL OPTION

- Adult faith formation is “the central task in the catechetical enterprise...the axis around which revolves the catechesis of childhood and adolescence as well as that of old age.” [*GDC, 275; NDC, 48A; Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, 5.*]
- Why would the Church say this?
- Is this your experience in your parish, school, or ministry?

*CATECHESI TRADENDAE (ON CATECHESIS IN OUR TIME)*  
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, POPE JOHN PAUL II, 1977

- “I cannot fail to emphasize now one of the most constant concerns of the synod fathers...I am referring to the central problem of the catechesis of adults. This is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.” #43

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# What is the Current Paradigm for Religious Education / Faith Formation?

## How does AFF fit in ??

Click link below to access the video:

<https://youtu.be/oe1mEbcx47g?t=668>



DISCIPLES

MAKE

DISCIPLES!



BE ONE. DISCIPLE  
MAKE ONE

# PARENTS: THE PRIMARY CATECHISTS

- Rite of Baptism for Children: “You will be the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith. May you also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- “Parents have a most solemn obligation to educate their children...so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.” Pope John Paul II, *On the Family in the Modern World*
- Survey of teens: National Study of Youth and Religion (University of Notre Dame and UNC – Chapel Hill)

Click link below to access the video:

<https://vimeo.com/171215797>



# GOD SEEKS US OUT AND INVITES US IN

- Inviting adults (back) into a deeper relationship with God
  - Providing an adult witness of living faith
  - ...not perfect but faithful
- Fulfilling your baptismal role (and role as catechist)
  - Affirming parents in their indispensable and irreplaceable role
- Building a relationship with parents in addition to the children is absolutely necessary (we must support and affirm their role!)

# CONTINUAL AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

- Intentionally seek to engage parents (get to know them) and involve them in the formation of their children...but how?
  - Open house and occasional social gatherings during the year
  - Greet parents/families with JOY (if Jesus is in your heart...)
  - Midweek email (Effective communication), social media, etc.
  - Adapt and provide for all circumstances: single parent families, etc.
  - Make yourself aware of hurts, struggles, and needs and LISTEN
  - Witness / share your faith (your story) in all of these
  - CONNECT FAITH WITH EVERYDAY LIFE (absolutely including family life)
  - Resources (websites, apps, videos, etc.)
  - Think of the Six Tasks of Catechesis (Prayer, Knowledge, Mission, etc.)
  - Ask for help from others in the parish/school, especially AFF leaders

# ENGAGING ADULTS REQUIRES ADAPTABILITY

- RCIA (done right! 😊) is the model for all catechesis
  - Apprenticeship and training in the Christian life
    - *Always adapted to the life situation and needs of the individual*
    - *ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL*
  - Adults do not grow in faith primarily by learning concepts but by sharing the life of the Christian community [see ACCC]
- Remember: One plants, another waters, but God causes the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7)

# Do's and Don'ts for AFF

- LISTEN and DISCUSS why this matters to me/you
- Involve a diverse team for planning and facilitation
- Ensure what you're doing is relevant to ordinary life
- Always use language that is understandable
- Incorporate the six tasks of catechesis
- Offer a great variety of opportunities (no box)
- Consider who is not being reached and WHY?

# Do's and Don'ts for AFF

- Just lecture as your only form of AFF
- Go it on your own
- Miss salvation by 18"
- Skip the discussion or theological reflection
- Just dust off what you did last year
- Discount the popular religiosity of the community
- Assume that one size fits all
- Miss the opportunities found in the messiness of life

# TRANSFORMATIVE AFF OPPORTUNITIES: EXAMPLES

- Ascension Press, FORMED, Loyola, Word on Fire, etc.
  - What questions should we be asking those who participate in these kind of “canned” programs (as well as really all AFF experiences)? What is the primary aim?
  - “Our goal is not to make smarter sinners.”
- Most importantly, we must engage ordinary life and the life of the parish (especially liminal moments) as the ultimate setting for adult faith formation
  - What are people hungry for???

# YOUR PARISH/SCHOOL VISION FOR AFF

- In groups of four or five develop a brief vision or mission statement for Adult Faith Formation in your community.
- *Remember the goals, principles, etc. of adult faith formation and catechesis*