The background is a solid dark blue color. On the left side, there are several overlapping, curved bands of lighter blue shades that sweep across the page from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

*Religious Education
Lessons for All Learners*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LESSONS FOR ALL LEARNERS

INTEGRATE BODY BREAKS

Many children need a break between activities to reenergize for the next lesson. Research shows that even twenty seconds of high-energy movement can

lead to greater attention and higher engagement for students. With this in consideration, design lessons with natural breaks. For example, if students have been working at their seats for a session and are coming to the meeting area for a new lesson, integrate a movement break. You might want to try:

- A “shake-down” where students shake their hands in the air and count backwards from twenty
- 5 jumping jacks, running in place, or high jumps
- 2 minutes of holding a yoga pose
- 1 minute of free dance
- Sing a class song or a prayer that integrates hand and body movements with the lines

You might be surprised with how just a short body break can increase student attention and engagement, and might even increase yours as the catechist, too!



Children learn in all different ways, just like adults do. Think of yourself as a learner. You may prefer learning along with a group, engaging with others as you ask questions and digest new information. Or, you might prefer to study independently, synthesizing new information alone in a quiet space. Children have these types of preferences, too. Read these tips to your modify lessons and design effective instruction for all types of learners in your religious education classroom!



PROVIDE LINGUISTIC SUPPORT

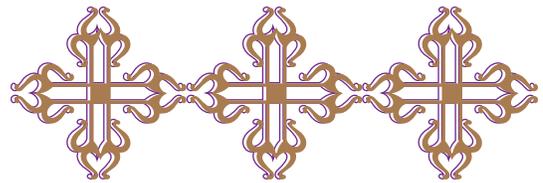
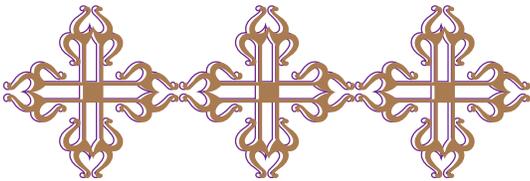
Consider the needs of your students’ English language skills. In today’s world, catechists hope to prepare students not only with the content

knowledge that they need to know their faith, but also with the language to share their faith clearly, efficiently, and with sophistication. Keeping this in mind, provide models for language use throughout your classroom. Model clear and concise communication. Use visuals to support the language use and faith vocabulary in your classroom. Create a word wall of important words, which might also include phrases and sentence stems. Students can rely on these words and phrases to clearly structure their ideas. You will find that the more they use your supports, the less they will rely upon them. Additionally, this will support your English language learners and lead them to success in the religious classroom as well.

CONSIDER LEARNING STYLES

Is the majority of student work in your classroom done independently? Do students frequently engage in partner work?

Have you ever tried a Think-Pair-Share or a Turn and Talk? Is there a lot of collaborative group learning in your classroom? Ask yourself these types of questions to get a sense of the way that you structure learning experiences for your students. As you reflect, begin to think of ways to vary the types of learning activities in your classroom; remember that students vary in their learning styles and preferences to communicate their understanding. One student who consistently struggles with independent work might flourish with the opportunity to work with a partner. Conversely, some learners that present as quiet and shy in a group setting might prefer to work alone and communicate ideas in writing rather than discussing with peers. Be empathetic to learning preferences by varying the types of applications you embed into your lessons.



PROVIDE EXAMPLES FOR SUCCESS

As catechists, we frequently have ideas for end products of student work. However, we

sometimes find that students have difficulty meeting our expectations. To increase student success, try providing a model so that students know what is expected. For example, if students are writing a prayer to God thanking him, write your own. Highlight the parts of your prayer that you would like students to include in their own writing, such as accurate spelling, descriptive words, or punctuation. If you would like students to remember appropriate behavior during Mass, create a visual chart that lists the important expectations, such as: stay seated, sing along, and keep hands to self. Use the chart each time you head to Mass. Your students might also benefit from a kid-friendly checklist or rubric that lays out for them the important steps to success, so that as they are working they can incorporate essential components and self-monitor. Keep in mind that students want to meet your high expectations. Make sure your expectations are clear so that they can rise to the occasion!

