

Archdiocese of Los Angeles  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD FAITH FORMATION**  
**SPECIALIZATION CURRICULUM**

**LESSON 1 - Philosophy of ECC, Program Guidelines**

This hour covers not only the WHY and HOW of ECC, but also explains development of three, four and five year olds as justification for the developmental approach taken to sharing faith experiences with young children (learning about a loving, creator God).

**LESSON 2 - Parenting with God**

This workshop will provide some guideposts to help parents navigate through the journey we call "parenting". Ideas will be offered to assist catechists in providing methods and activities that parents can share with their children in the home.

**LESSON 3 - Classroom Organization & Lesson Planning**

Especially geared to those catechists who have had no formal teacher training, this session covers physical items needed to establish a comfortable setting for the children and demonstrates how to organize a successful classroom experience (using the theme of "God Made Me Special").

**LESSON 4 - Storytelling Brings the Theme Alive**

Realizing that reading with children is very important in the early years, participants are taught how to choose appropriate books for various ages; how to insert a "God-message" in secular books; how to tell stories, use puppets, create flannel board stories; and how to have a class participate in acting out stories.

**LESSON 5 - Music & Movement Enlivens the Classroom**

A group participation session requiring participants not only to sing out with children, and use rhythm instruments, but also to create their own songs, especially by piggy-backing words onto familiar melodies. Young children's attention span being very short necessitates frequent change in the pace of a class. Activity ideas are shared for getting the wiggles out through dance, games, exercises, and following directions.

**LESSON 6 - Table Celebrations Build A Community of Love / Non-Eucharistic Celebration**

Celebrations held throughout the year develop in children an ability to celebrate life. Religious dimension is added to major holidays when we come together with our faith community and thank God for Life. Having children participate in organizing the celebration is essential and prepares them for the concept of Eucharistic celebration. As children complete the three year Early Childhood Catechesis program, they introduced to an age appropriate celebration which parallels the Eucharistic Celebration (Mass). They gradually come to an appreciation of the traditions and rituals of attending Mass. Workshop participants work together to produce a non-Eucharistic Celebration.

**LESSON 7 - Affirmative Discipline & Behavior Management Techniques**

Since the children are only with us a short period of time each week, we want that hour to be filled with love, enjoyment, and exploration. Many catechists are not professional teachers; strategies are shared for control of classroom activities and special situations, including symptoms and signs to be aware of and various stress factors that affect a child's behavior.

### **LESSON 8 - Exploring Talking and Listening Skills**

Giving children time to share thoughts and ideas is important in establishing strong self-esteem. Sometimes it is hard to get children talking; sometimes it is hard to get them to stop talking. How to encourage and control discussions while being a reflective listener are discussed.

### **LESSON 9 - Examining God's Gift of Feelings and Emotions**

Emotions are not right or wrong, they just are. In order to learn to handle emotions, children must learn to recognize and name what they are feeling. Class lessons encompass all the feelings God has given us.

### **LESSON 10 - Themes Involving the Senses**

Extra emphasis is given on organizing class lessons around appreciation of our God-given senses, with an overview of stories, songs, creative art, and prayer experiences using the five senses, with variations for 3's, 4's, and 5's.

### **LESSON 11 - Themes of Family, Friends, and Community**

Extra emphasis is given on organizing class lessons around appreciation of God's gift of family, friends, community helpers, and our parish as a loving community, with an overview of stories, songs, creative art, and prayer experiences using these themes, with variations for 3's, 4's, and 5's.

### **LESSON 12 - Themes Involving the Variety of Animals**

Extra emphasis on organizing class lessons around appreciation of the multitude of animals in God's world, with an overview of stories, songs, creative art and prayer experiences using pets farm, wild, fish, birds, insects, etc.

### **LESSON 13 - Themes Involving Elements -Air, Light, Water, and Earth**

This workshop will focus on organizing class lessons around appreciation of our God' given world, with an overview of stories, songs, creative art, and prayer experiences using Earth's elements, with variations for 3's,4's, and 5's.

### **LESSON 14 - Environmental Awareness Starts Early**

Caring for the world God created is important for survival of the planet. Children should be aware of ways they can help in that care. Values set early will last a lifetime.

### **LESSON 15 - Themes Involving Plants, Seasons, Nature's Cycle**

Emphasis with an appreciation of our Earth, God's world, with an overview of stories, songs, creative art, and prayer experiences using a variety of plants, fruits, vegetables, trees, flowers, and examination of how some plants change with the seasons.

### **LESSON 16 - Explaining Death to Young Children**

Because young children lack the cognitive development of abstract thinking, death must be treated in its concrete reality. Life cycles are explored as age-appropriate material. Adult faith beliefs in heaven, angels, and afterlife are ADULT concepts and tend to confuse young children.

### **LESSON 17 - Celebrating Easter as the New Life of Spring**

Concepts of Christ's passion, death and resurrection are beyond the scope of understanding for young children. Through examination of Spring bringing budding to trees, bulbs being transformed into flowers, eggs hatching into birds, and caterpillars becoming butterflies, a foundation is laid for future understanding of the importance of Christ's rising from the dead. Age appropriate classroom activities and celebrations are explored.

~ GRADUATION AND CLOSING ~