

## ***Echoes of Faith: Video Enrichment or Catechist Formation?***

By Jo Rotunno

Since the first *Echoes of Faith* modules were developed in 1996, hundreds of thousands of new catechists have entered our parishes. Many have no prior background. But if you see the spark of faith in them and the right mix of relational skills and love of young people, you probably will be inclined to take a chance. Most new volunteers are not yet motivated enough to commit to a lengthy catechist formation course. An easy path may seem to be to send them home with one or more videos to watch to gain some quick skills, but simply watching videos will not form a catechist or deepen commitment to ministry.

Faith formation is a dynamic process that best happens in community. As the *General Directory for Catechesis* points out, “The Christian community is the origin, *locus*, and goal of catechesis” (GDC, 254). To develop catechists who will build community in their teaching spaces and motivate young people to deeper involvement in the Church’s mission, make the *experience* of community a part of their own catechist formation.

*Echoes of Faith* honors this communitarian dimension. *Echoes* has a modular design made up of booklets and videos, and it is the booklets that hold the faith formation process. They guide the catechist through a process of personal reflection, new learning, faith sharing, assimilation, application, and integration. The videos themselves may be watched alone or with a group, but the booklets work best if the process is shared with at least one or two other catechists. Whether the group is large or small, led by you, another seasoned catechist, or self-directed by a small group, the booklet process will be the cement that binds the community together.

Whenever you have new catechists in need of formation, you can start with *Echoes of Faith*. It will help each catechist develop a realistic personal growth plan. The *Echoes* modules can become a springboard to a lifetime of ongoing formation. Choices from the three sets of *Echoes* modules—The Catechist, Methodology, and The Catholic Faith—are the place to begin. And the booklets will make all the difference!

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