

Family-Centered Model
We Believe™
Catholic Identity Edition
Grades K-8



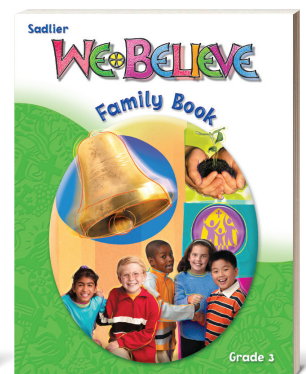
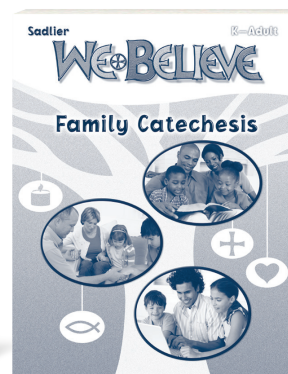
FAMILY-CENTERED MODEL

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Dear Catechetical Leader,

Family Catechesis is widely used term in faith formation programs, yet there are many interpretations of what family catechesis is and how it should look. Family catechesis does not mean shifting all responsibility for faith formation to families and parents. Instead, family catechesis is a shared responsibility—a partnership between parents, as primary educators of the faith, and the parish. Achieving this balance requires an examination of our existing faith formation programs and often some creativity.

Engaging parents, families, and other adults in the ongoing catechesis and faith formation of children is essential for their faith development. Effective engagement, scheduling conflicts, and lack of interest are only a few of the challenges facing you as you plan for parental and family involvement. Sadlier’s wealth of resources will help you overcome those challenges and create a family-centered focus that works for your program. Understanding and accessing these resources will help you to promote and increase family involvement in your unique program.



Print Resources

- *We Believe Family Book*
- *We Believe Family Catechesis*
- *We Believe Catholic Identity Edition, Grades K–6*
- *We Live Our Faith Catholic Identity Edition, Grades 7–8*

Online Resources

- Religion.SadlierConnect.com
- Blogs—*We Believe, We Believe and Share, Creemos y Compartimos* and *Family Center* (online articles, prayers, and resources grouped together in one category)

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Implement Flexible Resources with Your Family-Centered Model

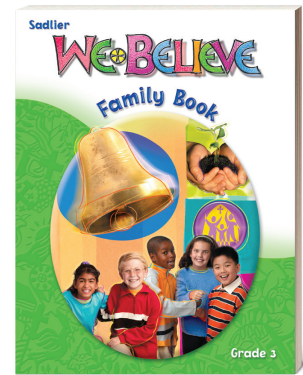
Provide Simple Plans to Partnering Families

We Believe Family Book

A *We Believe Family Book* for each grade level provides home lesson plans, activities and real-life applications for families of children using the *We Believe* program. Provide families in your family-centered model with the correct volume to allow parents to take an active role in faith development whether they are teaching lessons at home or sparking conversation about catechist-led sessions.

One way to implement a family-centered model is to have parents and catechists teach the faith formation classes on an alternating basis, with students attending a catechist-led class every other week, and parents teaching the lessons at home on alternate weeks. To facilitate this plan, provide parents with a *We Believe Family Book* and offer a monthly adult session during the catechist-led class to provide support, information, and additional resources. Co-teaching is a creative way to share responsibility without giving it up. This approach also suits parishes with classroom spaces that cannot accommodate all the children in the program.

Another way to include parents in a family-centered model is to invite parents to participate in regular sessions with their children. You might want to invite parents to take part in the *We Believe Catholic Identity Retreats* with their child. If you have a large program, you might want to gather different grade levels over several weeks. You might also invite parents to attend class with their child during several dedicated sessions. The seasons of Advent and Lent are two good times for inviting parents. Finally, invite families to participate in weekly faith sharing—including activities, prayers, and discussions—centered on the Sunday Gospel readings. (Refer to Sadlier’s Question of the Week feature at Religion.SadlierConnect.com.)



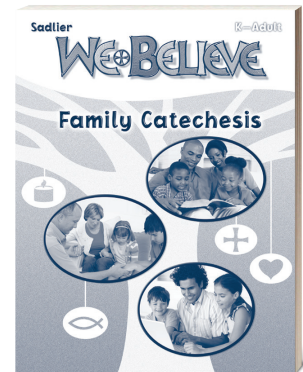
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Catechize Parents, too!

We Believe Family Catechesis Book

Provide parents in your family-centered Model the *We Believe Family Catechesis* book to increase opportunities for parent catechesis and help families to discuss, connect, and share their faith. The resource (one book for all grades K–6) has a schedule and format for implementation beginning with an orientation session for parents. It includes four sessions for parents with follow-up family sessions in which parents and children (regardless of grade level) discuss what will be or what was learned in children’s class sessions. Families gather to pray, learn, and discuss the unit theme and to engage in activities together. A closing celebration for the entire family concludes the year.



When utilizing the *Family Catechesis* book, invite parents to sessions while children are in catechist-led classes. Serve refreshments. Communicate that sessions are designed to help parents talk with their children about what they are learning. Schedule each session midway through each unit, and try to offer sessions at different times to allow parents to choose a convenient time to participate.

Even if you’re not using the full *We Believe Family Catechesis* resource, consider just the parent sessions. These sessions provide faith background for parents to talk confidently with their children about their faith. Offer mini sessions during the time children are in classes. Announce sessions well in advance, and send reminders. Provide refreshments if feasible.

We Believe Family Catechesis Program Organization

Session	Theme	Session Pages
Orientation Session with Parents (Sept.)	Orientation, program goals, participation expectations	5–10
Unit 1 Parent Session (Oct.– Nov.)	With All Creation We Lovingly Proclaim God’s Greatness	11–15
Unit 1 Family Session	Scheduled by family after Unit 1 parent session	16–18
Unit 2 Parent Session (Dec.– Jan.)	We Are the Church, United in Love	19–23
Unit 2 Family Session	Scheduled by family after Unit 2 parent session	24–26
Unit 3 Parent Session (Feb.– Mar.)	In Christ We Share God’s Life	27–31
Unit 3 Family Session	Scheduled by family after Unit 3 parent session	32–34
Unit 4 Parent (Apr.– May)	We Pray, “Thy Kingdom Come”	35–39
Unit 4 Family Session	Scheduled by family after Unit 4 parent session	40–42
Closing Celebration (Conclusion of program)	Activity, prayer, closing ceremony	43–48

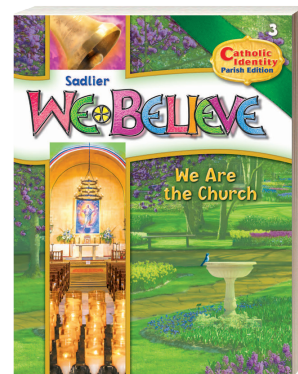
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Make the Most of Student Texts

Family Resources within *We Believe Catholic Identity Edition*

Utilize the multitude of resources within *We Believe* student texts to help parents and children talk about their Catholic faith. An intentional effort to use these resources provides another opportunity for family faith formation, at home discussion, and engagement with catechist-led lessons. Regularly send student books home (provide catechists with extra copies if you are concerned students might forget books) or tear out these perforated pages to distribute at parents meetings or send them home with a cover letter during the year.



- *Dear Family* pages introduce the unit.
- *At Home* note (found on reverse side of Chapter Test page) can be sent home once students complete the test.
- *Questions and Answers* “Q&A” pages (found in the Home Companion in back of text) provides a brief summary of the content children learn during the year, providing the opportunity for discussion.
- *Bringing the Retreat Home* (following each Catholic Identity retreat) allows families to read and talk about the retreat theme, engage in a simple activity, and pray together.
- *Why We Believe as a Catholic Family* presents Catholic teaching, citing sources in Scripture and Church teaching.
- *Resources for the Family* (found in the back of the student text) align with the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and include prayers, practices, and devotions to use at home.
- *Project Disciple Activities* often lend themselves to family discussion and can be completed by parents and children together.

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Engage with Events

Gather in My Name Events (www.Religion.SadlierConnect.com)

Families using *We Believe Catholic Identity Edition* in conjunction with dedicated family resources can simply and effectively complete lessons at home. To enhance the connection to the larger parish community, organize seasonal, intergenerational events that bring families together while they inform and inspire. There are many ways these events can be integrated into your family-centered model.



- Schedule *Gather in My Name* events four times a year to parallel the four units in *We Believe*. Promote events during initial meetings with parents who will be instructing their children at home. Encourage attendance at optional events with a “perk.” Evaluate your expectations for accountability. Perhaps attendance at the event would take the place of completing unit tests.
- Schedule *Gather in My Name* events throughout the year as seasonally appropriate. Utilize the suggested options (Option 1 to plan whole group events or Option 2 to plan cluster and grade-level breakout groups) to fit the needs of your parish.
- Adapt a *Gather in My Name* event (using Option 2, in which the young people break into grade-level or cluster groups). Have catechists teach a liturgical year lesson to students while parents participate in an adult session, or have parents join their child’s group. Make the process and teaching practical and the participation easy to ensure that the parents will return for future parent sessions. Thank participants and invite feedback with an evaluation.

Follow up any family sessions using *Gather in My Name* events. Be willing to start small and allow word of well-planned activities to spread and attract more family involvement.

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Discover Digital Resources

Religion.SadlierConnect.com

Religion.SadlierConnect.com includes resources and activities without required passwords and can be accessed simply by catechists and families alike. Demonstrate how to use this robust resource during a parent gathering early in the year so families can take full advantage from the start of your family-centered model. Digital family resources include:

- Interactive games and activities
- Chapter study guide for self-assessment
- Lives of the Saints (profiles and activities)
- What Your Child Will Learn (unit overviews for parents)
- The Faith of a Child (characteristics of young people and spiritual development by grade)
- Dear Family (online version)
- *We Believe* Unit Content
- Sharing Faith with My Family (one per chapter)
- Question of the Week (weekly faith sharing)
- This Week's Liturgy
- The Liturgical Year Calendar
- Prayers



Sadlier Religion Blogs

Sadlier Religion blog posts are timely and the blogs offer special downloadable resources, available in dedicated centers to support the needs of leaders, catechists, and families. Subscribe to the blogs for weekly inspiration. Explore the resource centers to supplement your family-centered model with appropriate resources. Provide downloads and activities to parents and children in class or during family sessions, and direct families to the blogs and family center to easily navigate on their own.

- www.WeBelieveAndShare.com offers inspiration & resources for Catholics
- www.SadlierWeBelieveBlog.com provides resources for Sadlier Religion program users
- www.CreemosyCompartimos.com—Inspiración Recursos para Católicos

