

## PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

*Each child is invited to sit around the tables on which handouts are laid out for them to use and take home.*

*It is important to get to know the children really well, and to ask each one what he or she hopes to enjoy during the catechetical journey, and what he or she hopes to find out in the catechetical sessions.*

*The catechist will help the children discover the deeper meaning of their free and personal commitment to catechesis.*

*Then the children are each given a piece of paper with the contact details of the catechist(s), the timetable of the sessions and the names of the children. The children are asked to keep these details in a safe place.*

*Before departing, the chosen hymn can be sung again.*



Starting the Year

## Celebration

# LIVE AS CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

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**GOD THE FATHER,**  
 creator of the universe,  
 You reveal yourself: you love.  
 You want to share your life and your love.

## I desire to become a child of the light

### THE WORD OF GOD *(Luke 8:16)*

“No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in can see the light.”

#### **References in the CCC**

Desire for God (27-30)

Baptismal grace (1262-1274)

#### **Theme of the Session**

God loves each one personally. We are all called to be his beloved children. Our heart is able to know him and to love him: our heart is made for this! God calls me to share in his own happiness. He invites me to participate in his life.

I respond to the grace which whispers in my heart:

“Do you want to receive all the love of God in your heart? Do you want to love as He loves?”

“Do you want to become a child of the light, filled with love and goodness like Jesus, the Son of God?”



## THE 7 YEAR OLD'S MEETING PLACE

*Before the session, the catechist will have prepared the room: it should be clean and welcoming, separated into two spaces :*

- *The 'Holy place of Meeting' is set apart for prayer and for the teaching session.*

*The children will sit there on a carpet or cushions.*

*The visual aid can be displayed with the name GOD, a few card figures representing the children who are listening, praising or praying. The packs for the children can be displayed at the bottom of the wooden set (without the specific cards which will be handed out at the end of the session).*

- *An area called 'the House of Nazareth' is set out with tables and chairs in a welcoming manner. This is where the children first meet together with the catechists, and where they carry out their practical activity at the end of the session.*

*On arriving at the 'Holy place of Meeting', the children will place their candles around the Word of God placed on a stand.*

*The catechist will present the 'Holy place of Meeting' and the 'House of Nazareth' to the children. Then she will invite them to sit down and to have a good look at the room.*

The catechist asks: **"What shall we do in here?"**

*(Let the children give an answer)*

The candle lit next to the Name of God shows us that he is living, and he wants to tell each one of us who he is and how much he loves us.

The Bible will always be there. We will open it in every session in order to read the Word of God and so we will learn to know God and to love him better each time.

The card figures will help us see how we can respond to God by listening to him, saying thank you to him and praying to him.

## TIME OF PRAYER AND CELEBRATION

*It is good to start the catechetical year with a celebration which will gather all the children and , if possible their parents, in the parish church.*

*Ideally, a priest should be present, as well as a few parishioners who could as it were "sponsor" the children. They could do so for example by welcoming the children at Sunday Mass, or taking them to Mass if no one else will, and by praying for them...*

*These parishioners may also help the catechists to welcome the parents when registering the children for the first catechetical session, so that the catechists are free to focus their attention on the children at that time.*

*This celebration is planned first of all for the 7-8 year olds. If the groups are small, a common celebration can be organised together with the older children (8-10 year olds).*

*If possible, the church bells should be rung.*

*The priest or catechetical leader welcomes the children and their parents in front of the church. He invites the children to gather into groups around their catechists and prepares them to go into the church (some of the children may be entering the church for the first time).*

## CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE HYMN OR SONG

*The Paschal candle is lit in the church. Other candles are burning: one next to the tabernacle, one next to the Word of God, one next to the altar, one next to the ambo and one next to the baptismal font.*

*The leader points out the candles to the children and explains that they are the signs of the presence of God.*

- *the 7 year olds gather around the baptismal font*
- *the 8 year olds stand close by*

*The leader reads the Word of God*

*“No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in can see the light.”*

God wants to give this light to all men, so that they may become his beloved children. He wants to offer it to each one of us.

Some of us have already received it on the day of our baptism. This light is meant to shine brighter and brighter throughout our life. Others will start to discover this light by coming to these catechetical sessions.

Today, God offers this light to each one of you. He asks us:

**“Do you want to receive this light and to let it grow in you all through the year, do you want to grow as a child of the light?”**

*As their names are called, each child comes to receive a little light lit from the paschal candle, while the hymn is sung again. The catechists too will do likewise, thereby showing the children that they too desire to grow in the light of Christ. Everyone then moves towards the altar around which the 8 year olds will gather. The 7 year olds stand close by.*

Everyone is called to become a child of the light, a child of God, and to belong to the great Christian family. This great family meets on Sunday. That day, all gather together around Jesus in the church.

This year, the 8 year olds will discover how to participate in the life of the Church family. They will now receive the prayer that Jesus gave us, the prayer of the children of God: the *Our Father*. This prayer will guide us at the start of this new year.

*The children receive the prayer of the Our Father printed on a beautiful card. We say or sing this prayer together.*

*The leader invites everyone to pray in silence, in order to entrust the new year to the Lord. He then invites the different groups to go to their own appointed meeting rooms with their catechists.*

*The hymn is sung once more.*