More than ever before, parishes, families, and even students are faced with the greatest obstacles to Catholic religious education in generations. We must take a stand for the future of the Church and continue to pass down the Catholic Faith. Thankfully, there is a way to combat all our various challenges.

Which of these do you face?

- Lack of volunteers and teachers in our classrooms
- Lack of parental involvement
- Budget Cuts / Financial Concerns
- Lack of Concern by Students for their Faith Education
- Logistics of Arranging Classes
- Creating and Grading Lessons Plans
- More responsibilities and less time for everyone
- Ensuring Students learn and live out the Faith
- Providing for Students with Learning Disabilities
## Presentation Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Learn the trend in religious education through the statistics made available by the USCCB and other Catholic organizations.</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Understand the seriousness of these trends and what these trends may mean for the future of the Church if decisive action is not taken</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Express the fundamental reasons why religious education must improve immediately</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identify CatechismClass.com as a unique solution poised to reverse the downward trend in religious education and help you with your greatest challenges</td>
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</table>
Key Findings

Being experts in this industry, we have learned a few things
USCCB data shows the number of children in religious education programs has been on the decline.

Catholic Children's Education Market

- Blue line: Primary school-age children in parish religious education
- Red line: Secondary school-age teens in parish religious education
USCCB data shows the number of adult Baptisms has declined precipitously.
USCCB data also shows the number of children Baptism has been on the decline over the past 2 decades.
And data by D’Antonio, Dillon, & Gautier in 2013 shows that only 46% of American Catholics actually believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist!
Data can be Confusing, Stories tell a Simpler Tale...
What if I told you, “Only 20% of the students that graduate from University XYZ acquire employment.”

Well that is exactly what’s happening in the Catholic Church in the United States. Only 20% of Catholics apply that faith to their lives when they reach the age of 23. The other 80% drop out!
We are Fighting an Uphill Battle – But we are Fighting for the Salvation of Souls

Just as King David fought and triumphed against Goliath, we too are fighting an uphill battle. Whereas so many in our world fight “for a perishable crown” (cf. 1 Cor 9:25), we are fighting for the salvation of souls. And yet, we are seeing so many souls lost:

• Nearly 80 percent of cradle Catholics are no longer Catholic by the age of 23
• Only 30 percent of Americans who were raised Catholic are still practicing
• 10 percent of all adults in America are ex-Catholics

Each soul that falls away from the Faith, is a soul lost. It is imperative that we reverse this trend immediately for the good of souls.

Source: Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell
The Failure of Religious Education for the 21st Century

Despite having one of the most rigorous and thorough preparation programs of any religion, we as Catholics are finding more and more of our members are falling away. We must ask, does the way we teach the Faith have to change? The facts are clear:

• Religious Education has not been effectively stopping the decline in the Church, as evident by the USCCB’s statistics
• Catholics have the most ex-members out of any religious group in the United States
• Everyday we are losing countless adherents. Why? What would we have done differently?
• Why are so many ignorant to basic Catholic principles like the Real Presence?

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen famously remarked, “There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.” We must change our way of teaching in order to change that false perception.

Source: Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell
What are we doing to stop this tide?
How We Help: Providing Online Catechesis

CatechismClass.com was founded in 2004 by Fr. James D. Zatalava. Using a body of experts from priests, theologians, parents, and children, Fr. Zatalava not only developed a one-of-a-kind online Faith Formation website, but he also has led research into the needs of religious education in our 21st century. Based on the results, he thought it was evident that parishes, parents, and learners need a program with (3) components:

✓ CONVENIENT – As Americans get increasingly busier and put less and less emphasis on religious education, providing families with a convenient and flexible education is essential. We must “become all things to all people” and meet them where they are at.

✓ COMPLETE – Whereas some publishers are better in certain subjects (e.g. Confirmation Prep, Adult Education, Godparent Preparation), the best content provider will offer a complete and thorough education all offered in a single platform – providing parishes and students with the greatest ease of use.

✓ COST-EFFECTIVE – With budget concerns for parishes and families, the best religious education programs out there must be offered in a cost-effective manner. Free material is typically lacking in its completeness and ease of use. But religious education should not cost hundreds of dollars. Thankfully, there is a solution that is convenient and complete while also being cost effective. But first, let's understand the trends we face.
The Benefits of Online Learning

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education published a meta-analysis of evidence-based studies of K-12 and postsecondary online learning programs. The study reported that "students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction." We have reason to believe that children in religious education will also perform better.

• Children want to learn and be challenged. The discipline in a secular classroom should carry over to religious education. Children should have regular activities and homework – including frequent reception of the Sacraments, practice of prayers and pious devotions, and abilities for them to share what they learn.
• Children want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They want to feel connected and a part of something; the internet provides this connectivity and hands-on learning.

The Internet is a tool that children and adults are already using. Let’s use it for the good of their souls.

What if there was a way to improve your parish’s religious education, reach students using their interests, and better educate both the students and the parents?
There is a better way: It is CatechismClass.com
CatechismClass.com offers (3) Primary Product Lines: Children’s Faith Formation Courses, Sacramental Preparation Courses, and Adult Faith Formation Courses.
Sacramental Preparation Courses

CatechismClass.com offers five online Sacramental Preparation Courses:

- First Confession Preparation (Young Adults Version as well as an Adult Version)
- First Communion Preparation (Young Adults Version as well as an Adult Version)
- Baptism Preparation Program (For Both Parents and Godparents)
- Confirmation Preparation (Young Adults Version as well as an Adult Version)
- Marriage Preparation with a focus on understanding the Theology of Marriage and living it out in the life of a newly married couple.

We proudly serve over 5,000 individuals from all the country and around the world each year with our Baptism Preparation course.
Adult Faith Formation Courses

CatechismClass.com offers several courses for adults looking to learn or better understand the Catholic Faith. We produce several courses including on topics including:

- The Theology of the Mass
- The Sacraments
- The Old Testament
- The Precepts of the Church
- The Gospels & The Life of Christ
- The Councils of the Catholic Church
- Christian Morality
- An Introduction to Christianity
- Eschatology: The Catholic Study of the Last Things
- Mariology: To Mary, Our Morning Star
- Prayer & Spirituality: How to Pray Like the Saints
- And More!

Our Adult Level Courses utilize our 7 Step Process: Introduction, Opening Prayer, Scripture, Catechism, Integration, Activity, and Closing Prayer. This is a proven method to learn the Faith!

We are the leaders in online RCIA and online RCIC classes.
Children's Catechesis

We offer grade level Faith formation programs from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Emphasis is placed on learning Catholic Prayers and laying a foundation in the Faith. Activities, prayers, and readings build on each other so students continue learning, internalizing, practicing, and loving the Faith as they advance in age.

The CatechismClass.com High School Program follows the program designed by the USCCB in 2008 called "Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age."

The outline for this program was developed by the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

CatechismClass.com is one of the first programs to create a high school program modeled after the USCCB’s framework.
How can we partner together to spread the Faith?
AN ONLINE CATHOLIC SCHOOL
TEACHING THE MODERN WORLD

Welcome to CatechismClass.com
An Online Catholic School, Teaching the Modern World

Click on a course to learn more NOW!

Our #1 Goal is to provide the unique experience of learning catechesis from any device you own in any place you choose for the lowest possible price.
Certificates Available Upon Completion of Course!
Appendix
Meet the Authors of CatechismClass.com

- **Episcopal Advisor:** Bishop Robert Vasa
- **Founder:** Fr. J.D. Zatalava
- **Content Authors**
  - **Fr. Zatalava** - Fr. Zatalava has been called "Father Catechism" informally because of his work with catechesis including his appearances on EWTN and writings in support of the need to teach the Faith to Catholics. Father has a Masters in Divinity and is the lead writer and “Editor in Chief” of CatechismClass.com
  - **Matthew Plese** – President and CEO of CatechismClass.com. Matthew’s education includes two years of seminary study in Catholic Doctrine, an undergraduate Philosophy Degree, an MBA from DePaul University, and a Certificate in Catechesis from Catholic Distance University. Matthew is a Third Order Dominican.
  - **Shannon Jones** - Board of Directors, CatechismClass.com, Former CEO, CatechismClass.com. Shannon Jones is a homeschooling mother of 7 who learned first-hand what works – and what does not work – for children's learning.
  - **Melissa Maleski** – Director of Religious Education for St. John the Baptist in Greater Philadelphia. She has worked as a catechist since September 2009 and has a Master’s Degree in Systematic Theology from Christendom College.
  - **Preston E. Wiggins, Jr.** - Holds a Masters of Arts in Theology and Christian Ministry with an adjunct Certificate in Catechesis from Franciscan University of Steubenville and has over fifteen years’ experience as a parish Director of Religious Education.
  - **Maria Vitale Gallagher** - Legislative director for the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation
  - **Matt Robinson** - Graduate from the college division of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. Though he discerned that God was not calling him to be a priest and ultimately left the seminary, he continued his theology studies at Holy Apostles College & Seminary earning an M.A. in Dogmatic Theology. Matt is the Director of Pastoral Services at St. Agnes Parish, West Chester, PA.

Authors of Our Programs

- **Adult Programs**
  - Fr. James D. Zatalava, Matthew Plese, and Matt Robinson
- **Baptism, Holy Communion, Confession, and Confirmation Preparation**
  - Father James D. Zatalava
- **Children’s Programs**
  - Father James D. Zatalava, Shannon Jones, Melissa Maleski
- **Marriage Preparation**
  - Preston E. Wiggins
- **Ethical Courses**
  - Maria Vitale Gallagher
CatechismClass.com

Program Applications for Parishes

• **Parish-Sponsored Programs-CatechismClass.com as the main curriculum**
  – Use the CatechismClass.com program as the main text for your CCD/religious education programs
  – Have full access to the program for all of your students. And your students will have access forever – it will never expire so they can look back even years from now on their materials.
  – Children’s quizzes are automatically graded, and reports are emailed to you instantaneous to keep you in the loop on their formation.
  – Have full access to all reports on CatechismClass.com and have access to discounted adult formation materials for the benefits of your teacher’s own formation
  – Refer your parents and godparents who need Baptism preparation to our innovative course.

• **Parish-Supported Programs-CatechismClass.com as a supplement to textbooks**
  – Offer the CatechismClass.com program as a supplement to your existing program
  – The CatechismClass.com Program is extremely useful for children with special education needs (ie., disabled children and children with learning disabilities) who are unable to attend weekly classes or learn at the pace of the other students
  – Parishes can purchase licensed agreements, providing teachers with unlimited access to printed materials for classroom usage as they supplement their current textbook with our resources, which include special liturgical year resources

**Reporting and accountability**
• Parish administrators and teachers can monitor the progress of students and check their scores electronically
• Each student is given a unique account to read their material online and take the quizzes, allowing for strong parental involvement
• Our catechists and team monitor student’s progress to ensure they are learning and not cheating. We also correspond directly with any student who would like clarity on content.
Endorsements from Prominent Catholics

"You are really providing a valuable service... I sure hope this gets to be more widely known -- and used!"

**Dr. Scott Hahn,**
Prominent Theologian

"The entire program is given over the computer at the student's own pace. I've taken a look at the site, and it certainly looks to be a step up (a very big step up) from the CCD classes I took."

**Karl Keating,**
Founder of Catholic Answers

"Again, I must say that this is a monumental work that is very good. I strongly recommend it to everyone."

**Rev. Carl Pieber, C.M**
Executive Director Central Association of the Miraculous Medal

"Its' materials are tailored for every age, from docile first graders to senior citizens seeking remedial instruction. And each pupil can work at his own pace as he falls in love with the ageless truth. Praise the Lord, CatechismClass.com is the real thing!"

**Mrs. Donna Steichen,**
Author
Ecclesial Supporters

Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Cardinal Archbishop
Archdiocese of New York

Raymond Cardinal Burke
Vatican City

His Holiness, Pope Benedict the XVI, Pontiff Emeritus

Archbishop Hughes
Archbishop Emeritus
Archdiocese of New Orleans, LA

Bishop Baker, Diocese of Charleston, SC

Archbishop Chaput
Archdiocese of Philadelphia, PA
Ecclesial Supporters

26 March 2012
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for your letter of March 9th last, regarding the project of CatechismClass.com, which makes available on-line catechism lessons for a wide range of ages, and provides also programs on the Holy Mass according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, Latin hymns and other treasures of Catholic art and philosophy.

I will be happy to remember in my prayers the intention of the work of CatechismClass.com, as you request.

Thank you for the offer to distribute any audio or written presentations I have available. At present, I do not have any presentations available for distribution, but I am no less grateful to you for your generous offer to make them available on-line.

I ask you please to remember me in your prayers. I have great need of your prayers to assist me in carrying out my responsibilities in the Roman Curia.

Invoking God's blessing upon you, while confiding your intentions to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Joseph, I remain

Yours devotedly in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
Prefect, Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura