

## Integrating Technology in Religious Education on a Parish Budget

1. Housekeeping (Deb)
2. Introduction of Speaker (Deb)
3. Prayer – Collect, Memorial of St. Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor

Almighty ever-living God,  
who raised up the Bishop Saint Athanasius  
as an outstanding champion of your Son's divinity,  
mercifully grant,  
that, rejoicing in his teaching and his protection,  
we may never cease to grow in knowledge and love of you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

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### 4. Intro

- If your parish is anything like many in my diocese budgets for religious education are tight
- At the same time many are recognizing the need to integrate technology into our catechetical ministries
- How can we use technology appropriately without breaking the parish budget?

### 5. Why integrate technology?

- Some people will push back on need to use technology
  - i. Say that "old methods" worked just fine
  - ii. This is true!
  - iii. At the same time there are good reasons to consider integrating technology into catechesis

- We always have!
  - i. Church has always made use of technologies available
    1. Teachings of Jesus passed by writings
    2. Printing press
    3. Radio
    4. Television
    5. Internet
  - ii. Church has never been afraid to embrace new technologies and employ them in appropriate ways on behalf of her mission of evangelization.
- Church asks us to
  - i. Second Vatican Council – *Inter mirifica* (Decree on Social Communication)
  - ii. Follow Christ's example – use what is familiar to people
  - iii. Part of the New Evangelization
    1. Fr. Robert Barron: familiarity with new media is one of the 7 qualities needed in a new evangelizer
- Expands available resources
  - i. Blessing and a curse!
- Surprisingly cost-effective
  - i. Open Source, Creative Commons

## 6. A Quick Note on Policies

- It behooves all catechists and catechetical leaders to be aware of and know their parish or diocesan policies on technology and new media

- Currently a wide variety of policies in place across the country
- Check your local policy before implementing any of these ideas

## 7. Strategies

- Blogging
  - i. Strengths
    1. Engages students in theological reflection
      - a. Similar to journaling
      - b. Encourages introverts, those who need more time to formulate responses and thoughts
    2. Encourages interaction in faith topics outside of normal religious education time
      - a. Comments encourage students to engage in conversation, expand thoughts
    3. Free
      - a. Two most popular services – [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com) and [blogger.com](http://blogger.com) – are free
  - ii. Concerns
    1. Online safety
      - a. “3 Pieces” rule
    2. Not all students may have internet access at home
    3. Extra time for catechist to read student postings
- Online Resources
  - i. Strengths
    1. Many free resources available

- a. Variety of media
    - 2. Resources from publishers correlate with textbooks
  - ii. Concerns
    - 1. Takes time to sort the wheat from the chaff
      - a. Especially resources from “unofficial” sources
      - b. Exercise discretion
    - 2. Some sites are easier to navigate than others
- Video Creation
- i. Strengths
    - 1. Allows students to “take the wheel”
    - 2. Low-cost
      - a. “Point and click” video cameras can be purchased for as low as \$50
      - b. Students with cell phones can use the built-in camera
  - ii. Concerns
    - 1. Potential copyright concerns
      - a. If editing existing material (mash-ups)
    - 2. Potential technical difficulties
    - 3. Potential for “goofing off” instead of staying on task

## 8. Activities

- Student blog journaling
  - i. Assign a reflection question based on each session’s content

- ii. Have students write 3-4 paragraphs in response to reflection question
  - iii. Ask students to comment on
- Liturgical Season Activities
  - i. Integrates liturgical season into our catechetical content
    - 1. As called for in Church's teaching on catechesis!
  - ii. Go to publisher's site
  - iii. Find liturgical calendar
  - iv. Find an appropriate handout or activity for this week
- Video Creation: Faith interviews
  - i. Have students interview
  - ii. Focus on content, not style
  - iii. Bonus: post one interview on parish web site, Facebook page every week

## 9. Advice for Catechetical Leaders

- Have proactive policies in place on appropriate use of internet and social media
  - i. Will help catechists know the boundaries
  - ii. Helps protect students and catechists
  - iii. My diocese's policy and training materials are available at [www.dio.org/it/resources](http://www.dio.org/it/resources)
- Know what you don't know
  - i. Be open to listening when a catechist approaches you with an idea on how to use a technology you may be unfamiliar with
  - ii. Be willing to learn/try
- Evaluate the use of tech in your catechetical ministries

- i. Is it being used appropriately?
- ii. Is it being used effectively?

10. Q&A

11. Final Thoughts

- We don't have to have the best equipment or software to integrate technology into our catechetical ministries
- Need
  - i. Willingness to try new things, especially based on "best practices" in pedagogy
  - ii. Ask students for help – they are the experts!