



How *Christ In Us* Helped Our Lady of Good Counsel Save Catechists Hours of Lesson Prep and Increase Student Engagement

CASE STUDY

2+

Average hours saved preparing each lesson

90%

Student response rate on post-program assignments

2x

Increase in home-study participation



“*Christ In Us* [is] very user-friendly.”

Cynthia Robinson,
Coordinator of Religious Education,
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish



Our Lady Of Good Counsel School And Parish

Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish is a Roman Catholic Church and School.

Highlights

Challenges

- Finding a more interactive religious curriculum
- Moving towards digital integration
- Fit for both virtual and in-person learning
- Save time spent looking for outside resources and activities

Solution

- A hybrid religious education program for in-person and online learning
- User-friendly for teachers, students and parents
- Extensive lesson plans and different activities for every learning style

Results

- Positive feedback from student families
- “Unprecedented” 90% response rate on post-program assignments
- 2+ hours of prep saved for each lesson

Challenges

Integrating a blended-learning curriculum

As the Coordinator of Religious Education at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Cynthia Robinson realized it was past time to update the curriculum and teaching resources. They had been using the same book for a few years, and they needed to switch to something more interactive.



“We knew we needed something fresher, something more up-to-date,” Cynthia recalls. “Kids in regular classroom settings are being asked to go online every day, and our old books didn’t really offer that.”

Our Lady of Good Counsel offers two types of religious education: religious education in the classroom and parish faith formation. In the parish program, their catechists are all volunteers, and most don’t have a teaching background. They need support and guidance on how to build a lesson, and where to find engaging activities for students.



Our catechists have all kinds of different occupations and professions, and they’re not necessarily trained as teachers,” explains Laura Kowalick, the parish’s office manager. “They may not consider that a video is a good resource. They may not know that adding music into a lesson can help reach students with different learning styles.”

Some parish catechists regularly spent a lot of time looking for outside resources to complement the book-based lecturing they were doing.



“As the years went on, I looked for other types of resources to reach the kids, so it wasn’t just them reading from the book and me lecturing them,” Cynthia says. “I found my own videos and creative projects to give them, but it took a lot of time to find those resources.”

An interactive, hybrid digital solution would solve a lot of Our Lady of Good Counsel’s religious education challenges: a blended-learning approach would provide teachers and catechists with grade-level-appropriate and relevant hands-on resources that engage all students, regardless of learning style.



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Solution

A hybrid religious education program with hours of resources for every lesson

When Cynthia and Laura tried Sadlier's **Christ In Us** hybrid learning program, they immediately fell in love with the digital resources it offered.



“**Christ In Us** was very user-friendly, and the interface was similar to Google Classrooms, which our students and teachers are familiar with,” Cynthia says. “We could tell the transition would be easy.”

Christ In Us uses a spiraling approach to learning: the program teaches the basics of catechism first and then dives deeper into the concepts in each subsequent year. Cynthia and Laura were thrilled with how the program included pre-designed lesson plans in the curriculum.



“In the old program, the lessons were not laid out the way they are in **Christ In Us**,” Laura explains. “When we first started the program over the summer we were amazed. You could just follow the lesson plans **Christ In Us** provided. That was a wonderful improvement for our volunteers without formal teaching experience.”

Christ In Us included so many activities for each lesson that teachers could pick and choose what they wanted to use for their hour-long lesson, and assign extra activities to students outside of class. They no longer need to spend hours searching for outside resources.



“The **Christ in Us** portal portal has music, games, and all kinds of activities,” Laura adds. “It has short videos and longer videos. It has everything to really assist new teachers and experienced teachers capture students’ attention.”

Students love the different types of activities too. Having options for assignments allows students to find activities that really resonate with them and fit their individual learning styles.



“They can work on reflection questions if they’re the type of learner that likes to put things in their own words. They can take a standard quiz. They can play word games. And they can also do creative projects,” Laura explains. “It’s beautiful. The children are really responding to the different options that the **Christ In Us** portal makes available to them.”



“Christ In Us *was very user-friendly.*”

Results

Increased student engagement and reduced lesson-prep time

Today, our Lady of Good Counsel's families love the new **Christ In Us** program, and they often give Cynthia and Laura very positive feedback on the platform.



“One parent told me recently that she likes watching the videos along with her child because it enables them to learn and share faith together,” Laura says.

Using **Christ In Us** has been a game-changer for teachers as well: Cynthia estimates the program saves each teacher up to two hours of prep time per lesson: one hour designing the lesson, and another hour searching for supplementary materials. **Christ In Us** provides catechists with everything they need.



“Now, anyone could step into that role and do a great job, because **Christ In Us** gives them the tools they need,” Laura says.

But most important of all, using **Christ In Us** has done wonders for student engagement: after teaching a second-grade class during the school year, Laura recently got a 90% response rate on homework she assigned over the summer.



“In the past, if we gave assignments outside class time, the parents weren’t pleased,” she says. “This year, I got 18 out of 20 responses. I was shocked. That’s completely unprecedented for us.”

They’ve seen similar increases in their home-study program, which in the past had the lowest engagement from students and families. Since implementing **Christ In Us**, they’ve more than doubled the engagement rate, from 12% the prior year, up to 30% in the first three months.

Cynthia and Laura are thrilled with the results.



“The **Christ In Us** portal gives our home study students an outlet to reflect on what prayer and the Catholic Faith means to them that they wouldn’t necessarily have otherwise,” Laura says. “It gives students a chance to put their faith in their own words, and they’ve really responded to that.”

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**Your catechists, students,
and parents will love hybrid
learning with *Christ In Us.***

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