

Using the *Catechetical Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation*
to make explicit catechetical dimensions of an existing parish program or event

Name of Program or Event:

Christmas Giving Tree

Brief Description of how the program of event currently takes place:

- ✘ During October and early November the parish social outreach minister accepts requests for assistance from families that need help
- ✘ Parish minister creates “ornaments” with age, sex, and general category (e.g. toy, clothes, etc.) for each perspective recipient with a code number
- ✘ A Christmas tree is set up in the parish narthex during the week before the first Sunday of Advent with these “ornaments” on it.
- ✘ On the first Sunday of Advent parishioners select ornaments from the tree and register them with volunteers who staff a table next to the tree.
- ✘ People bring the wrapped gifts the weekend of the third Sunday of Advent with a gift tag on it containing the code number. Volunteers receive it and log it in.
- ✘ Volunteers take the gifts during the week and sort them based on code numbers, replacing gift tags with ones with the actual first names of the recipients. They follow up with any gifts not received.
- ✘ Families pick up their wrapped gifts at the parish beginning December 20.

Targets that are in some fashion related to this activity

Strand: 1.4 - Catholic Social Thought

A3.1.4.1 God wants all people to love and care for others.

A4.1.4.1 Catholics love and care for others by sharing food and clothes with people who don't have any.

G01.1.4.3 Each person is special and unique.

G02.1.4.6 The corporal works of mercy include: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.

G06.1.4.5 All people in communion with Christ are called in both justice and charity to care for those who are least in the community and society.

G07.1.4.2 Christians are called to understand themselves as part of a broader community. The good of that community is the responsibility of every individual.

G08.1.4.6 Those who are poor, disadvantaged, and marginalized have a special claim on the efforts and assistance of all Christians. This is called a preferential option for the poor.

G12C.1.4.4 The Church is involved in both the act of charity and the work for justice.

MA.1.4.11 The most basic principle of the Christian moral life is an awareness that every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God.

MA.1.4.16 While all human beings are equal in dignity, it has been a constant part of the Christian religious tradition, inherited from Judaism, that the poor or marginalized are to be given special consideration and care.

Strand: 3.7 - Living the Moral Life

G01.3.7.1 Jesus taught people how to love God by expressing gratitude to his Father and by being kind to others.

G03.3.7.1 Christians are called to offer help to people in need by serving others as Jesus did, especially the most vulnerable.

G08.3.7.2 The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are actions that help one's neighbor with their bodily and spiritual needs. These works are motivated by charity which show love of God and neighbor.

G09.3.7.2 Works of mercy are charitable actions by which people come to the aid of their neighbor's spiritual and

bodily necessities. Among these works, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity.

Strand: 6.3 - Social Action and Transformation

G01.6.3.1 God wants people to be fair, just, and helpful to one another.

G03.6.3.1 Christians are called to act as Christ did in serving those who are in need.

G04.6.3.1 The Gospels indicate that people will be judged primarily on the basis of their willingness to be involved in helping others in need.

G05.6.3.1 All Christians have a responsibility to be concerned about and care for everyone.

G06.6.3.1 Every person in the world is a spiritual brother and sister according to Jesus' teachings.

G10.6.3.2 Social action and transformation includes addressing both the immediate needs of the poor and oppressed and tending to the transformation of social structures.

G11.6.3.1 The Church is called to provide all its members with opportunities to assist those in need, form solidarity with the poor, and reflect on structures and institutions that foster conditions for poverty and work to alleviate them.

G12.6.3.2 The faith community is called to provide opportunities and experiences that integrate the Catholic social teachings of the Church into Christian discipleship.

MA.6.3.1 Communion with Jesus Christ leads one to live a life of service.

MA.6.3.2 Christians are called to work for the transformation of society in all their daily activities. This is achieved by promoting the common good and serving those in need by giving preferential treatment to the poor, powerless and oppressed.

MA.6.3.3 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor, for it is by what they have done for the poor and oppressed that Christ will recognize his chosen ones.

MA.6.3.5 Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to action for and among the poor and oppressed.

Selection of specific targets that will be addressed:

G04.6.3.1, G05.6.3.1, G06.6.3.1, G07.1.4.2, G08.3.7.2, G10.6.3.2, G11.6.3.2, G12.6.3.2, G12C.1.4.4, MA.1.4.11, MA.1.4.16, MA.6.3.2, MA.6.3.5

Changes or tweaks to the existing program or event to address these targets explicitly:

1. Training of Volunteers:

- ✘ Stress to volunteers that may have contact with the recipients of the gifts that they are in no circumstances to act judgmental, superior, or patronizing toward those who receive them. Remind them that
 - † every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God. (cf. MA.1.4.11)
 - † the poor or marginalized are to be given special consideration and care. (cf. MA.1.4.16)
- ✘ To volunteers who have contact with parishioners who will be donating the gifts, stress
 - † When registering the ornament to the donating family say, “Thank you for your effort as a Christian disciple.” (cf. G12.6.3.2)
 - † When they receive the wrapped gifts say, “Thank you for helping us as a parish give witness to our belief in the solidarity of the human family.” (cf. G05.6.3.1, G06.6.3.1, G07.1.4.2)

2. When parishioners select an ornament:

- ✘ On the reverse of each “ornament”, include the following text
 - † “Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to action for and among the poor and oppressed.” (direct quote of MA.6.3.5)
 - † Thank you for effort as a Christian disciple to assist the Church in her mission for and among the poor!
- ✘ The goal of this is, from the beginning, to get parishioners to think of their action as being essentially connected to their identity as Christian disciples and to connect this activity to the broader mission of the Church (cf. G12.6.3.2)

3. When parishioners return the gift

- ✘ When the parishioners return the wrapped gift, give them a small flyer in return. On one side of the flyer have the following text:
 - † Thank you for helping to meet the physical and emotional needs of some of our poor brothers and sisters within our community! Your charitable gift to a person unknown to you is testimony of our Christian belief that we are all sisters and brothers. Everyone is my neighbor whom I am called to love as myself. (cf. G05.6.3.1, G06.6.3.1, G07.1.4.2)
 - † God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor, for it is by what they have done for the poor and oppressed that Christ will recognize his chosen ones. (direct quote of MA.6.3.3, cf. G04.6.3.1)

- † Having made a material sacrifice, we now ask you to make a spiritual one as well. Over the next few days, please consider as a family praying for the recipient of this gift and his or her family. (cf. G08.3.7.2)
- ✕ On the opposite side of the flyer have the following text:
 - † In this community effort, through acts of Christian charity, we seek to meet some of the immediate needs of the poor families in our community.
 - † As Christian disciples we are also asked to consider the root causes of poverty and, in justice, to seek to bring about a transformation of society so that these causes are eliminated. (cf. G12C.1.4.4, G10.6.3.2, G11.6.3.2, MA.6.3.2)
 - † Here are some groups and organizations within our parish and our community that work for the transformation of society. Please consider becoming educated and involved in their work and efforts. <List them>