

Internet Use and the Lesson Planning

The internet is a great tool. It is also a potentially dangerous source of information that is inaccurate, misleading or heretical. And this is not our goal!

I've had a few mishaps happen. Let me tell you about them, and then how to avoid them!

- A catechist prints out and brings in all this stuff that is a 'sacraments' lesson for 8 year olds. Well and good, except that it was Mormon! (Mormons call the class to prepare kids for baptism "sacraments" class.) Obviously not what we were shooting for, here.
- A student in an online class I taught kept giving me weird fundamentalist answers to all the questions in the course. What he was doing was Googling, using the assignment language, and then cutting and pasting from the first link offered. (Instead of like, reading the assignment and getting his information from there.)

From these examples, may I offer some guidance:

- 1) **Begin with what we've given you.** In many, many cases there will be good guidance for enrichment and supplementary activities in the printed and internet resources available to you already. Also, we have tons of material on hand - almost anything out there and then some. Spend some time after class or beforehand checking out what we have. Or ask us to pull things for you to peruse. You might not need the internet to find fun and interesting things for your lesson.
- 2) **Look for the source.** First, is it Catholic? (Not 100% of things have to be, but what you find might be pretty far afield.) If it is a picture, it might not matter. If it is for little kids, it might be simple enough that the differences between denominations are slight, to non-existent. (This is not always the case, though. Check, as noted below.) However, staying close to home is the best bet in most cases.
- 3) **Even "Catholic" sources can be suspect.** There is stuff out there about how Pope Francis is a heretic and a false Pope. There is stuff that purports to be Catholic and is totally in error about doctrine. Anyone can put something online and call it 'Catholic.'
- 4) **Wow! How can I know what I'm looking at?**
 - A) **Compare to the materials you already have on hand.** Does it pretty much agree and say the same things? Or does it seem to say something totally different?
 - B) **Check the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) on the subject.** If it seems at odds with that, it shouldn't be in your lesson plan.
 - C) **ASK!** Send us the links to what you're thinking of using. We can take a look and let you know what is within bounds and what is outside.
- 5) **General rule:** Don't have your heart set upon a particular thing and build a whole lesson around it, only to find out *NOT!* Check it out beforehand and we'll work with you to both enliven your lessons and make sure that they are Catholic.