



a Kendall Hunt Company

Be My Disciples

Children with Special Needs Teaching Tips





Be My Disciples

Evangelization and catechesis for individuals with disabilities must be geared in content and method to their particular situation.

*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities
#25 November 1978*

The pastoral statement from our Bishops encourages teachers of religion in Catholic schools and parish catechists to differentiate catechesis based on the needs of the learner, especially individuals with special needs. RCL Benziger supports catechists/teachers to meet the special needs of children so these young people can more fully participate in their own faith formation and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the *Be My Disciples* faith formation program, catechists/teachers are guided to address the learning differences of children throughout the year. Practical teaching tips are already provided in the catechist/teacher guide with suggestions, ideas, and ways to adapt lessons focusing on many different types of needs. The teaching tips empower catechists/teachers to help students learn and retain their faith knowledge, thereby helping them to integrate their faith into daily living.

The ritual prayer experiences support children by helping them focus on and experience the prayer life of the Church. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we welcome all people in our faith formation programs to experience God's loving mercy. We are blessed by all young people because they help us see the beauty of life with warm and open hearts.

The following pages identify the types of differences addressed in the catechist/teacher's guide, and the teaching tips to support the formation of children with disabilities throughout all grade levels. Let RCL Benziger's *Be My Disciples* program help you minister to your children with special needs.

Another special education resource is *The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Program to Improve Catholic Religious Education for Children and Adults with Intellectual Disabilities*. Through 220 developmentally constructed lessons, students learn about the sacraments of the Church, the life of Christ, the Blessed Mother, the Commandments, the saints, and living the Christian life. It provides student activities, lesson plans, prayer services, and other ideas for a variety of religious education settings, including parish, school, and in the home for family catechesis.

RCL Benziger is committed to you by providing catechetical resources to support the ongoing faith formation of the People of God. We are grateful for your partnership on the formative journey.

GRADE 1

Chapter 1:	Visual Cues
Chapter 2:	Finding the Place on a Page
Chapter 3:	Words to Know
Chapter 7:	Doing a Word Search
Chapter 19:	Communicating Through Pictures
Chapter 22:	Differentiated Instruction

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Chapter 14:	Providing Visual Cues

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Chapter 20:	Providing Writing Assistance
Chapter 21:	Using Our Bodies to Learn
Chapter 23:	Open Book Review

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Chapter 5:	Providing a Word Bank
Chapter 6:	Learning Through Movement
Chapter 12:	Developing Memory "Hooks"
Chapter 15:	Organizing Information
Chapter 16:	Providing Reading Assistance

GRADE 5

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Chapter 2:	Visual and Hands-on Learners
Chapter 4:	Organizing the Activity
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Chapter 12:	Providing Clues
Chapter 14:	Processing Skills Disability
Chapter 19:	Providing a Word Bank
Chapter 20:	Matching Words and Phrases
Chapter 23:	Focusing Attention

GRADE 6

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CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

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CHRIST IN THE LITURGY

Chapter 2:	Reducing Assignment Length
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CHRIST REVEALS GOD'S MYSTERY

Chapter 2:	Using Drawing to Convey Ideas
Chapter 5:	Creative Expression
Chapter 8:	The Challenge of Including All Learners

GRADE 1	
Chapter 1:	<p>Visual Cues</p> <p>Invite the students to look in a children’s Bible for visual cues to help them recall Bible stories. This will be very helpful for students with visual learning difficulties. The picture that accompanies the story will remind them of the narrative. Working with a partner can also help a student process the visual cues and increase retention.</p> <p>Need: Students with reading difficulties</p>
Chapter 2:	<p>Finding the Place on a Page</p> <p>Many first graders are just learning to read. They may not be able to easily find their place on the page, especially when there are several features. When you direct them to a feature on the page, have them point to it first. Then check to see that all have done so before proceeding. If you want the students to highlight a word, print the word on the board first for all to see, and then tell them to count down the lines from the top of the page until they find the word. These simple things will help all students to be successful learners.</p> <p>Need: All students, especially those with reading difficulties</p>
Chapter 3:	<p>Words to Know</p> <p>Cut six strips of an appropriate length from light poster board. On three of the strips write one of the sentence parts from Column A in the matching activity. On each of the other three strips write one of the incomplete sentences from Column B. Distribute the strips to six students. One at a time ask the students with the strips from Column A to find the person with the words from Column B that will make a correct sentence with the words on their strip. Invite the two students to stand together and hold up their strips. Have the class read the sentence aloud. Then have the students draw the correct matching line in their books. Repeat the exercise with the remaining pairs of students.</p> <p>Need: Students with visual or attention deficits</p>
Chapter 7:	<p>Doing a Word Search</p> <p>Gather the students who may find the word search activity difficult and work with them as a group. Give them step-by-step strategies for locating and circling a word. Once a word is found, tell the students to cross it out in the box above the puzzle.</p> <p>Need: Students with reading, writing, or visual difficulties</p>

<p>Chapter 19:</p>	<p>Communicating Through Pictures Provide a variety of appropriate magazines for the students and have them cut out pictures that illustrate respect. (You may also consider finding print information about the Saint Vincent de Paul Society as an additional resource.) The pictures may be divided into groupings, with each grouping glued onto a half sheet of paper. The half sheets may be stapled to form a booklet about ways to show respect. Need: Students with speech and language difficulties</p>
<p>Chapter 22:</p>	<p>Differentiated Instruction Work with students to meet their individual learning needs. Some students may not feel comfortable acting out in partners. Providing choices for students helps them show what they have learned in a variety of ways. Invite students to think of someone who shows gentleness to them. Have them write a thank-you note to that person and encourage them to give the person their note. For students who have difficulty writing, allow them to tell you the name of the person who shows gentleness and help them with their writing. In addition, take this opportunity to discuss with the class the importance of respecting differences. Help the first graders recognize that God wants us to love and honor one another. Need: Students with writing and comprehension deficits</p>

<p>GRADE 2</p>	
<p>Chapter 2:</p>	<p>Pairing Up Students Students with reading and writing difficulties need special consideration when it comes to creating pairs. Write the names of students who display adequate reading and writing ability skills on index cards with a green marker. Write the names of students with reading or writing difficulties on index cards with a red marker. When you create partners for activities choose one student from each group to ensure that you have a student with adequate reading and writing abilities in each pair. Need: Students with reading and writing difficulties</p>
<p>Chapter 5:</p>	<p>A Little Extra Some students may have a difficult time processing words and definitions. For the Recall activity numbers 6–8, students are asked to add letters to complete the sentences. You may want to write in more letter clues to help the students complete the words. Need: Students with reading difficulties or processing disorders</p>

<p>Chapter 11:</p>	<p>Working with a Partner Students with reading difficulties may be more successful with the multiple choice questions in the review if they are able to work with a classmate. Pair the students up and have each pair complete the activity after discussing the questions together. When they agree on the correct response, have the children then circle that choice in their texts. Need: Students with reading deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 14:</p>	<p>Providing Visual Cues After reading The Readings from the Bible in the text, write the assembly’s response to the readings and the Gospel Acclamation on the board or a poster: Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Practice the response with the class by proclaiming, “The word of the Lord.” Practice the Alleluia by singing a familiar one and using the ASL sign.</p> <p>Have the students recite the responses clearly, with conviction. Encourage the students to respond in the same enthusiastic way at Sunday Mass. Later in the lesson, after reading We Listen to God’s Word (pages 190–191), add the response to the Gospel reading to the poster: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. Display the poster in the classroom for use as you proceed through the chapter and for use whenever you celebrate Mass with the students. Need: Students with reading difficulties</p>

<p>GRADE 3</p>	
<p>Chapter 18:</p>	<p>Unscrambling Words Fill in several of the blanks to help students who have difficulty reading or writing. Also provide them with the beginning letter for the other words. Need: Children with learning deficits or reading deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 20:</p>	<p>Providing Writing Assistance Children with difficulties in reading or writing will benefit from first discussing multiple response possibilities for the Living the Great Commandment activity on this page. On the board or on a flip chart write the heading “The Great Commandment,” and create four columns with the following headings: <i>words that describe the title; action words that describe the title; words that describe a feeling about the title; another word for the Great Commandment.</i> Have all members of the class give suggestions of words appropriate for each heading. List these suggestions on the board in the appropriate column. Invite the students to then complete the Living the Great Commandment cinquain, using words listed on the board or other words they may think of on their own. Need: Students with reading and writing deficits</p>

<p>Chapter 21:</p>	<p>Using Our Bodies to Learn Some students are kinetic learners who understand a concept best when they become involved in it. To make the concept of the buried seed of faith come alive for the class, gather in an area where students have space to move about without bumping into each other. Using the first paragraph of Missionary Disciples as your guide, begin by inviting the students to become like the seed planted in dark ground. Read the remaining sentences of the paragraph, one at a time, and have the students act out the different phases of growth—the seed growing through the darkness, breaking through the Earth and coming into the light, being fed by the sun, and changing and growing into a full plant. Need: All students, especially kinesthetic learners</p>
<p>Chapter 23:</p>	<p>Open Book Review Encourage students with limited attention spans to look back to the Beatitudes on page 308 in this chapter to complete the review activity. This “open book” review will better reinforce what the students have learned about the Beatitudes and will give them the ability to complete the matching activity. Need: Students with limited attention proficiency</p>

<p>GRADE 4</p>	
<p>Chapter 1:</p>	<p>Assisting Written and Verbal Responses To assist students with reading or writing deficits, try this suggestion to ease the process of sentence construction. Divide the word choices in the Recall segment into two groups on different colored cards. On one color write YHWH, Moses and Jesus Christ. On the other color write Covenant, Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel. Have each student choose one card from each color category and create a meaningful sentence using the chosen words. The student may speak the sentence aloud rather than write it. Cards should be returned to the stack after use and shuffled. Need: Students with reading and writing difficulties</p>
<p>Chapter 5:</p>	<p>Providing a Word Bank Post a list of the words the students will be looking for in the puzzle. Matching the words may come easier than creating them from memory for students with reading difficulties. This technique can be used wherever a selection of words is needed to complete an activity. Need: Students with reading deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 6:</p>	<p>Learning Through Movement Write the events in the Recall activity on large cards. Have each student hold a card and line up in position so that the events are in the proper order. Need: Students with attention deficits</p>

<p>Chapter 12:</p>	<p>Developing Memory “Hooks” Students with reading difficulties and students who are visual learners will benefit from using “hooks” to remember the steps in the prayer of meditation. Create a chart with simple line drawings for each step. Transfer these simple drawings onto a bookmark for the students to take home with them. For example, for the meditation on this page, your chart might include the following words: Sit, Picture, Think, Pray, Ask. Need: All students, especially visual learners</p>
<p>Chapter 15:</p>	<p>Organizing Information Children with learning or attention deficits may have difficulty organizing information. They will benefit from a small variation for the review activity. Number the words in the word bank in the order they will be used in the story. Then have the students tell the story. Need: Students with limited organizational skills</p>
<p>Chapter 16:</p>	<p>Providing Reading Assistance To make the review activity easier for students who need assistance with reading, you might want to write the sentences 1–3 on the board and underline the parts that are false. Then have the children complete the activity by replacing the underlined word or words with the correct answer. Need: Students with limited reading proficiency</p>

<p>GRADE 5</p>	
<p>Chapter 1:</p>	<p>Teaching and Reinforcing Vocabulary Create a word wall on poster board for your classroom to reinforce the terms in Faith Vocabulary. At the beginning of each lesson write the faith vocabulary words presented in the chapter on the word wall. Have the students draw illustrations next to the words to help them remember the meaning of the terms. Need: Students with reading deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 2:</p>	<p>Visual and Hands-on Learners Have the students use modeling clay to sculpt scenes of Bible stories they know from either the Old or New Testaments. Have the students explain their work to the rest of the class, if they wish. Display the finished sculptures on a length of colorful fabric or ribbon on a table in your classroom, school or parish common area. Need: All students, especially visual and tactile learners</p>

<p>Chapter 4:</p>	<p>Organizing the Activity Provide the students with page numbers on which they can find the scrambled words in the Chapter Review activity. The word attributes can be found on page 50; soul and original sin can be found on page 54; blessing can be found on page 48; holy can be found on page 49. You can also highlight or underline the words on the page for students who have difficulty locating them. Need: Students with spelling difficulties or visual processing disorders</p>
<p>Chapter 7:</p>	<p>Learning by Doing Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to select a situation from the The Holy Spirit is My Helper activity. Have the students in each group work together to create a skit to depict the situation they have chosen. All students should have roles in the skit. Each group can then present its skit to the entire class. Need: Children with deficits in writing proficiency</p> <p>Providing a Word Bank Provide a word bank by writing word choices on a small note card for students who may have difficulty coming up with responses for the We Remember activity. Need: Students with attention deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 12:</p>	<p>Providing Clues Some students may be more successful in completing the crossword puzzle activity when they are provided simple clues. For example, give them the first letter for each response for the crossword puzzle or direct them to the page in the text where the answer is located. Need: Students with language or reading deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 14:</p>	<p>Processing Skills Disability To help the students who may have difficulty describing their personal experiences by writing about them, provide students with visuals of people who have put their faith and trust in God. Bring in mission magazines and diocesan newspapers. Show the students photos of people taking care of the sick and elderly, and of people comforting others. These visuals will prompt the students to discover and talk about their own experiences. Need: Students with deficits in writing proficiency</p>
<p>Chapter 19:</p>	<p>Providing a Word Bank Write the hidden words on the board or a poster for students who may have difficulty finding the words in the Covenant word search activity. The word bank will also be helpful to the class in creating their paragraphs. Need: Children with attention deficits</p>

Chapter 20:	<p>Matching Words and Phrases</p> <p>Write the Beatitudes included in the “We Remember” activity on individual cards or strips. You should write the words found in the first column on one card and the words from the second column on another. Mix the cards up, and then have the students move the cards around to match the halves.</p> <p>Need: Students with organizational deficits</p>
Chapter 23:	<p>Focusing Attention</p> <p>It is easier to get students’ attention before they open their textbooks. Have students clear their desks and put down pencils before you begin a new subject during the school day. Use a brief activity, question, or brain-jogger to focus their attention. Even simply asking them to recall a point of information from the previous day can be sufficient to refocus them. When you turn to the text, the students will have transferred their attention to the lesson.</p> <p>Need: Learner engagement and students with attention deficits</p>

GRADE 6	
Chapter 3:	<p>Locating Words in the Text</p> <p>Help students identify important vocabulary words in the To Help You Remember section in their texts. Have them highlight the words and the definitions in the book to reinforce their understanding of the definitions.</p> <p>Need: All students, especially visual and tactile learners</p>
Chapter 5:	<p>Learning About Jesus Through Art</p> <p>Provide support for students who face reading challenges by showing different pictures of Jesus drawn from a variety of sources. Point out how some artists emphasize Jesus’ humanity and others emphasize his divinity. Engage the students in a discussion about how we can learn about who Jesus is from the ways in which artists have depicted him. Discuss what each artist or illustrator might have had in mind about Jesus when creating the picture.</p> <p>Need: Learners with limited ready proficiency</p>

<p>Chapter 10:</p>	<p>Understanding the Scripture Story Assign several students to manage a production of a play based on the Scripture story of the Baptism of Jesus. Other students might draw or design props, such as the dove or the clouds. A small choir might sing songs such as "Song Over the Waters," by Marty Haugen. Need: All students, especially kinesthetic learners and students with limited reading comprehension proficiency</p>
<p>Chapter 11:</p>	<p>Organizing Information Draw a large Venn diagram on the board. Cut sentence strips from poster board or purchase ready-made sentence strips at a teacher supply store. Ask the students to brainstorm ideas about the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Write their ideas on the sentence strips. Distribute sentence strips to youth in the class. Ask them to place the strips in the diagram to indicate how the Sacraments are alike and different. Need: Learners with writing deficits</p>

CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<p>Chapter 1:</p>	<p>Working in Groups It is important to involve the young people in group work. One way to get started is by using a strategy called "Think, Pair, Share." When asking a critical thinking question, first provide the young people with an opportunity to think silently about their response. Then have them share in pairs, and finally, share their responses with the large group. Need: This method encourages individual thinking, and is welcoming to those young people who may be more introverted in nature and need time to feel comfortable with large-group sharing</p>
<p>Chapter 2:</p>	<p>Working With Partners Discussion and cooperative work are learning tools used throughout these lessons. Through partner and small group interactions, young people are given the opportunity to share their knowledge and expand their thinking as they dialogue with each other about the faith of the Church. They also learn to consider and respect the views of others. Working with partners and groups also can be beneficial for those with learning deficiencies as this format fosters peer assistance and encouragement. Need: Young people with learning difficulties</p>
<p>Chapter 5:</p>	<p>Reducing Assignment Length Consider reducing the length of assignments for those students who have limited writing proficiency or attention deficit challenges. This consideration should be given to chapter activities, chapter reviews, and unit reviews. For example, when a review item calls for the students to define more than three faith vocabulary terms, consider limiting the activity to three terms. Need: Students with limited writing proficiency or attention deficits</p>

Chapter 8:	<p>Including All Learners</p> <p>Implement the following strategies to help the young people focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the young people specific roles in group activities, for example, a timekeeper or recorder. • Allow the young people a choice of activities whenever possible. • Be very clear when giving group instructions, and when it is possible, write them out for the young people to use as they are working. <p>Need: Young people with attention deficits</p>
Chapter 9:	<p>Using Art to Express Ideas</p> <p>As an alternative to the directions of the activity above, give the young people the option of creating posters with simple slogans or images to encourage other young people who might be struggling to live their faith in Christ. This option will make it easier for those who have difficulty expressing themselves in writing, and will appeal to those learners who might be more graphically or visually oriented.</p> <p>Need: Young people with limited writing proficiency</p>
Chapter 11:	<p>A Moving Story</p> <p>Discuss with the group their responses to the Faith Connection activity. Invite them to work in small groups to create two different skits showing how young people make sacrifices in their lives to show their love for God. Tell them that one of their skits must only use movement and facial expressions. When they present the silent skit, have the other groups guess what is being shown.</p> <p>Need: Students who learn best visually and through movement</p>
LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS	
Chapter 1:	<p>Provide Options for Assignments</p> <p>Strive to meet the needs of all your learners. Assignments that give young people some influence over the outcome can be highly motivating. Provide activities for the young people that give them options. For example, on this page, instead of having them read about Peter's Vision, have them role play or do a dramatic presentation of the story. Assign narrators and characters, and use the entire Scripture passage from Acts chapter 10. You will be supporting a developmental need of young adolescents.</p> <p>Need: Students with limited reading proficiency</p>

<p>Chapter 3:</p>	<p>Visual Learners Among children there are many different learning styles. Young people who learn best visually benefit from seeing things written or illustrated on the board. Drawing simple pictures or diagrams can also enliven a presentation for all learners. Using visual symbols can help young people learn things with greater ease. Writing on the board is a good way to present new or unusual faith terms or names as well. Need: Learners who learn best visually or learners with a deficit in writing or reading</p>
<p>Chapter 3:</p>	<p>Reducing Assignment Length As you work through the text with the students, consider reducing the length of assignments for those students who have limited writing proficiency and attention deficit challenges. This consideration should be given to chapter activities, chapter reviews, and unit reviews. For example, when a review item calls for students to define more than three faith vocabulary terms, consider limiting the activity to three terms. Need: Students with limited writing proficiency and attention deficits</p>
<p>Chapter 9:</p>	<p>Role Playing All learners benefit from role-playing activities. Role playing invites the use of the verbal and kinesthetic expression of ideas. The use of this strategy encourages all young people, including those with learning difficulties and deficits, to more freely and fully express their ideas. Need: Learners with reading or writing deficits</p>
<p>CHRIST IN THE LITURGY</p>	
<p>Chapter 2:</p>	<p>Reducing Assignment Length As you work through the text with the students, consider reducing the length of assignments for those students who have limited writing proficiency or attention deficit challenges. This consideration should be given to chapter activities, chapter reviews, and unit reviews. For example, when a review item calls for the students to define more than three faith vocabulary terms, consider limiting the activity to three terms. Need: Students with limited writing proficiency or attention deficits</p>

<p>Chapter 3:</p>	<p>Visuals Visuals are an integral part of the design of <i>Be My Disciples</i>. The <i>Be My Disciples</i> student texts provide the students with the experience of a wide variety of visuals, such as contemporary poster art, classic masterpiece art, contemporary art, and photographic imagery.</p> <p>These visuals have been carefully chosen to speak to today’s visual generation to facilitate the young people’s discovery of the deeper meaning of the faith of the Church in a way that words alone cannot achieve. Integrate these visuals into your presentation. Allow time for the students to reflect on and discuss them.</p> <p>Need: Young people with limited reading proficiency</p>
<p>Chapter 3:</p>	<p>Partner and Small Group Work The young people should regularly work with partners or in small groups. At the beginning of today’s lesson the young people participate with partners in a quick brainstorming, which serves as a focusing activity to lead into the content about the meaning of sacrament. Later in the lesson they work collaboratively in small groups, thus experiencing exactly what they are learning about: how to be valued and responsible members of a group, and of the Church. Throughout the lessons—from learning core content, to facilitating review, to celebrating prayer—look for times when small group interactions and experiences will best serve your students’ growth in faith.</p> <p>Need: Students with limited writing proficiency</p>

<p>CHRIST REVEALS GOD’S MYSTERY</p>	
<p>Chapter 2:</p>	<p>Using Drawing to Convey Ideas As an option for the activity, students with writing deficits can draw a picture to illustrate a scene that represents the goodness and power of God to them.</p> <p>Need: Students with limited writing proficiency</p>
<p>Chapter 5:</p>	<p>Creative Expression Have the class work in small groups to create a poster, song, or role play activities that shows how people “see with the eyes of faith.” Emphasize that we profess our faith in Jesus through our words and actions.</p> <p>Need: Students with learning disabilities</p>
<p>Chapter 8:</p>	<p>The Challenge of Including All Learners Many young people have disabilities that affect their concentration. Implement the following strategies to help the young people focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the young people specific roles in group activities, for example, a timekeeper or recorder. • Allow the young people a choice of activities whenever possible. • Be very clear when giving group instructions, and when it is possible, write them out for the young people to use as they are working. <p>Need: Young people with attention deficits</p>