

## **Total Catechesis/Religious Education: A Vision for Now and Always**

Thomas H. Groome and Harold D. Horwell, eds. *Horizons and Hopes*,  
(New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 1-29.

*The following are excerpts from Chapter 1 "Total Catechesis/Religious Education" by Thomas Groome. They are included here to provide a guide when considering catechetical religious education opportunities for the child with autism. Because children with autism have core challenges with language, a traditional classroom where language is the primary mode of teaching will be particularly challenging for the child with autism to understand. For these reasons, all ministries of the church should be considered potential opportunities to catechize. This is the essence of a Total Catechesis Education approach and it is an approach that while not "new" is currently emerging as a more effective way of "forming, informing and transforming" (Groome,2003) the total faith community.*

"Total" refers to a comprehensive and community-centered paradigm that forges a coalition of parish, family and school or parish programs, engaging all aspects of these communities and their every member in sharing faith together for lifelong conversion as disciples of Jesus for the reign of God.

We are the Word for one another whether it is in our witnessing, care or celebrating as a community of faith.

### **Descriptions of the Church's Ministries**

**Ministry of Community Witness-** The church is to be a witnessing community of faith, hope and love, bonded together "in right relationship" with Christ and each other by the Holy Spirit. It is to be a community of solidarity that empowers them to live the way of Jesus and to inherit new life in Christ.

**Ministry of Word-** Evangelizing, teaching and preaching "Evangelization" is an umbrella term describing the church's whole mission in the world and situates catechesis as one function within it.

**Ministry of Welfare-** The Church is to serve human needs and reform the personal, interpersonal, and social-political causes of suffering, violence, injustice and ecological destruction

**Ministry of Worship-** The Church is to engage in acts of public and communal acts of worship such as the liturgical act of breaking of the bread and the sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.