

# Development of Learning Activity Plans for Acquiring Teaching Skills and Desired Characteristics of Catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand

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**Abstract** - The objectives of this study were: 1) to examine the needs for acquiring teaching skills and the desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with the Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand, 2) to develop learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand, and 3) to find out the result of learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand. The sample group consisted of: 13 catechetical experts selected by purposive sampling; 343 catechists by sample size table of Krejcie & Morgan; 15 catechists as an experimental group by purposive sampling. The research instruments were: semi-structured interview, questionnaire, learning activity plans, focus group discussion. The data was analyzed by frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and content analysis. Research findings were as follows: 1) The need for teaching skills and desired Characteristics of Catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand; 1.1) The need for acquiring teaching skills. Catechists needed five teaching skills. The first was Reflection ( $\bar{x} = 4.44$ , S.D. = .598 high level). The next was Practice ( $\bar{x} = 4.40$ , S.D. = .579 high

level) Third: Experience ( $\bar{x} = 4.31$ , S.D. = .548 high level). Fourth: Context ( $\bar{x} = 4.30$ , S.D. = .535 high level) and the last was Evaluation ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ , S.D. = .646 high level); 1.2) The need for acquiring desired characteristics. Catechists needed nine characteristics. The first desired characteristic needed was Faithfulness to God ( $\bar{x} = 4.47$ , S.D. = .613 high level). The next is Living one's life by following Jesus as the model ( $\bar{x} = 4.46$ , S.D. = .640 high level). Third: An active life of commitment to society ( $\bar{x} = 4.45$ , S.D. = .666 high level). Fourth: Doing one's best to improve continually ( $\bar{x} = 4.43$ , S.D. = .697 high level). Fifth: Working with the spirit of community ( $\bar{x} = 4.43$ , S.D. = .730 high level). Sixth: Promoting morality and offering transformational leadership ( $\bar{x} = 4.42$ , S.D. = .639 high level). Seventh: Attitude of loyalty and service to the Catholic Church ( $\bar{x} = 4.35$ , S.D. = .742 high level). Eighth: Making ongoing evaluation of life and work ( $\bar{x} = 4.32$ , S.D. = .710 high level) and the last was Knowing and Loving each individual learner ( $\bar{x} = 4.31$ , S.D. = .632 high level), 2) The learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand were composed of 26 learning activities and 100 hours for learning and practice during a

**period of 31 days. There were 14 activities for developing teaching skills and 12 activities for developing desired characteristics, and 3) The result of learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand; 3.1) The result of all learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skill were at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.49$  S.D. = .271); 3.2) The result of all learning activities plans for acquiring desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand were in higher level ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$  S.D. = .258)**

**Keywords - Teaching Skill, Desired Characteristics, Catechist, Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm**

## **I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS**

According to the constitution, Thailand pays attention and promotes religious freedom for all people in the kingdom. This means that this country respects for the basic right of human being. Moreover it also recognizes the importance of cultivating morality in the nation by focusing on training teachers to teach citizenship, morality and ethics. The Catholic Church has established legal and policy developments for catechesis and catechists and this is an important task of the Church. So the development of catechists is one important task in response to the policy of the country and as a part of building a peaceful. The pastoral plan of the Catholic Church in Thailand for the years 2010 - 2015 focuses on pastoral care and evangelization. In the area of pastoral care, the Church emphasizes lifelong faith formation. A national committee should have a concrete, systematic and organized plan of action for faith formation of all level of the faithful. Every parish and catholic school should provide catechesis for their member (article n.18). The others reasons came from the teaching experiences and need of catechists themselves. They as educators, need a

pedagogy that endeavors to form men and women for others but in a post-modern world where so many forces are at work which are antithetical to that aim (Society of Jesus, Thailand, 2013, p.23). Catechists still need an ongoing formation if they are able to provide pedagogy effectively which encourages student activity in learning, fosters growth in human excellence and promotes formation in faith. Another reason to consider is methodology for catechizing. Usually catechists use textbooks as resources to teach. So they use a Two-Step method. This means a lecture style, in which the catechist has the role of authority and a dispenser of knowledge. Students are passive receivers. This is known as the teacher centered model. This method emphasizes memory skill but lacks thinking and reflection which will make student convert the knowledge into practice in their daily life. And results from the survey (Watchasin, 2013) found that catechists in Thailand still need to develop themselves in three areas; knowledge, attitude and teaching skill. Especially there is a more teaching skills and acquisition of desired characteristics. From these reasons, this Development of Learning Activity Plans for Acquiring Teaching skills and desired Characteristics of Catechists According to Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand is needed for the progress of Catholic Church.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine need for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand,
2. To develop learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand and
3. To find out the result of learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand.

### III. SCOPES OF THE RESEARCH

#### A. *Scope Content*

The content of the research consists of 1) Speech of His Majesty the King of Thailand on Education, 2) Idea and theory of non-formal education, 3) Idea and theory of adult education and transformative learning, 4) Perennialism, 5) Plan for development of catechists in the Thai context, 6) Ignatian pedagogy paradigm, 7) Theory on development non-formal education program, and 8) Related research.

#### B. *Variable Scope*

Independent variable was learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand. Dependent variable was result of learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand.

#### C. *Population Scope*

1. The Population for examining the need for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists according to Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand were 47 catechetical experts and 2,431 catechists. The sample group consisted of 13 catechetical experts and 343 catechists.

2. The Population for examining the develop learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand was five advisors.

3. The Population for experiment learning activity plans was 15 Catechists.

4. The Population for evaluation Learning Activity Plans was five catechetical experts.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

Teaching Skills mean the ability to catechize according to Ignatian pedagogy paradigm which is composed of five elements.

They are Context, Experience, Reflection, Action and Evaluation. Desired Characteristics mean the way of life of the catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm which is composed of nine characteristics: Faithfulness to God, to Know and Love each individual learner, Living one's life by following Jesus as the model, Promote morality and offering transformational leadership, an Active life of commitment for society, Attitude of loyalty and Service to the Catholic Church, Doing one's best to improve continually, Working with the spirit of community and Doing ongoing evaluation of life and work.

Catechist means the person who was assigned by an authority of the Church to teach Christian doctrine for the members of Catholic Church and other interested persons.

Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm means a way of learning and a method of teaching taken from the Spiritual Exercises on Ignatian of Loyola. It is based in St. Ignatius Loyola's spiritual exercises, and takes a holistic view of the world. The goal of the Ignatian pedagogy paradigm is to form men and women for others.

### V. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

This research had four steps: 1) Examine need for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand, 2) develop learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand, 3) Experiment learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand, and 4) Evaluate learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand.

## VI. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The instruments for this research are: 1) The questions for semi-structured interview and 2) The questionnaires for the sample group and questions for the focus group discussion which the researcher developed and were examined by five experts. Content validity of the developed test was verified by

the Item-Objective Congruency (IOC) index between 0.60-1.00. The result of the experiment, its reliability was verified by calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula. Reliability was 0.977.

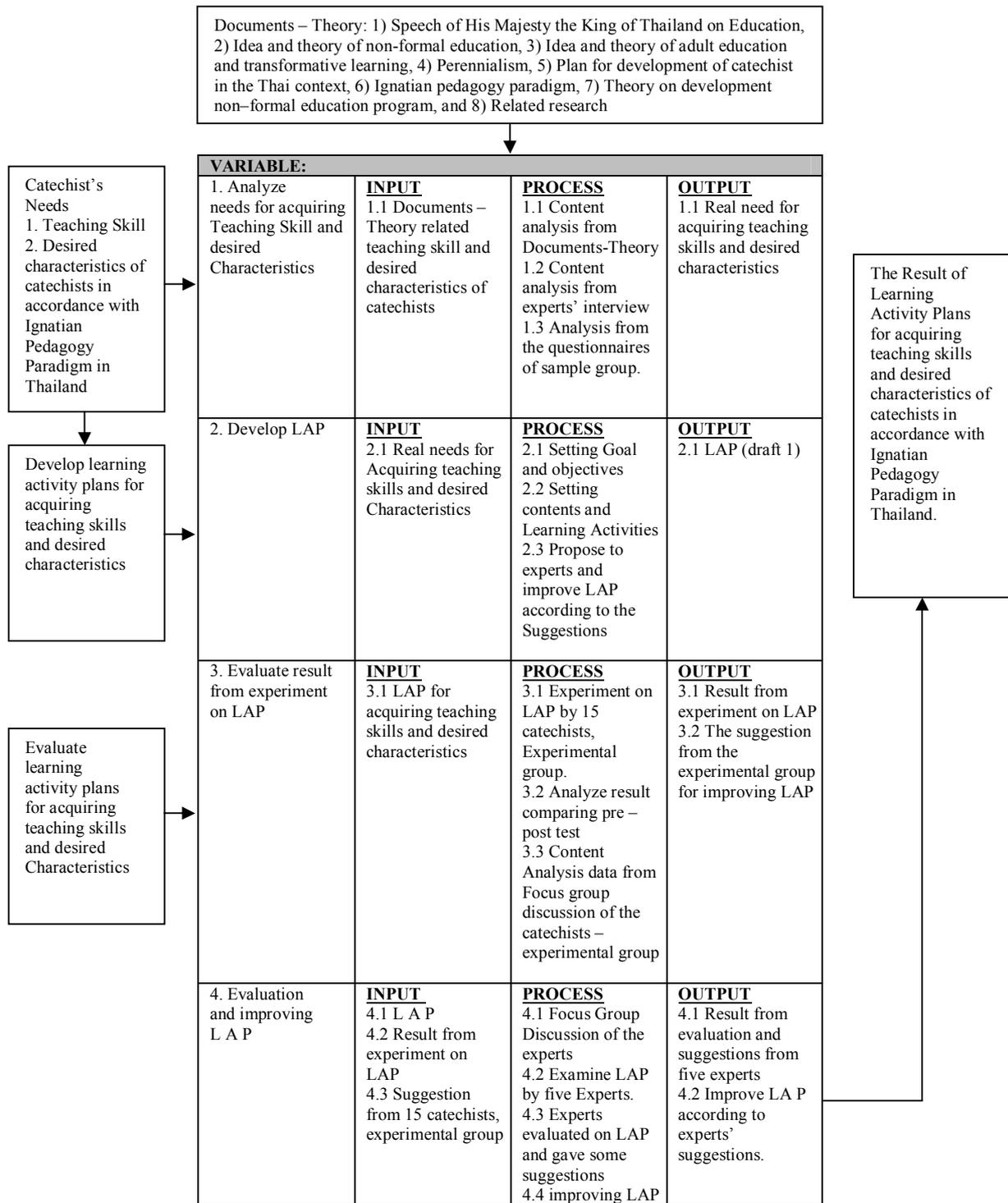


Fig 1. Conceptual Framework of Research

## VII. RESULTS OF RESEARCH

1. The need for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand.

1.1 The need for acquiring teaching skills in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand.

Experts' need for catechists to acquire teaching skills in five aspects: 1) Context, 2) Experience, 3) Reflection, 4) Action, and 5) Evaluation.

Catechists' need to acquire teaching skills, the most is Reflection ( $\bar{x} = 4.44$ , S.D. = .598 high level). The next is Action ( $\bar{x} = 4.40$ , S.D. = .579 high level). Third: Experience ( $\bar{x} = 4.31$ , S.D. = .548 high level). Fourth: Context ( $\bar{x} = 4.30$ , S.D. = .535 high level) and the last is Evaluation ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ , S.D. = .646 high level).

1.2 The need for acquiring desired Characteristics of Catechists According to Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand.

Experts' need for catechists to acquire desired characteristics in nine characteristics: 1) Faithfulness to God, 2) To know and love each individual learner, 3) Living one's life by following Jesus as the model, 4) Promote morality and offering transformational leadership, 5) An active life of commitment for society, 6) Attitude of loyalty and Service to the Catholic Church, 7) Doing one's best to improve continually, 8) Working with the spirit of community, and 9) Doing ongoing evaluation of life and work.

Catechists' need to acquire desired characteristics, the most is Faithfulness to God ( $\bar{x} = 4.47$ , S.D. = .613 high level). The next is Living one's life by following Jesus as the model. ( $\bar{x} = 4.46$ , S.D. = .640 high level). Third: An active life of commitment for society ( $\bar{x} = 4.45$ , S.D. = .666 high level). Fourth: Doing one's best to improve

continually ( $\bar{x} = 4.43$ , S.D. = .697 high level). Fifth: Working with the spirit of community ( $\bar{x} = 4.43$ , S.D. = .730 high level). Sixth: Promote morality and offering transformational leadership ( $\bar{x} = 4.42$ , S.D. = .639 high level). Seventh: Attitude of loyalty and serve Catholic church ( $\bar{x} = 4.35$ , S.D. = .742 high level). Eighth: Doing ongoing evaluating of life and work ( $\bar{x} = 4.32$ , S.D. = .710 high level) and the last is to Know and Love each individual learner ( $\bar{x} = 4.31$ , S.D. = .632 high level).

2. Learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand. Learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand was composed of 26 learning activities, 100 hours for learning and practice during a period of 31 days. They were 14 activities for developing teaching skills and 12 activities for developing desired characteristics.

3. The result of experiment on learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists according to Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand.

3.1 The result of all learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills according to Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand is in high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.49$  S.D. = .271).

3.2 The result of all learning activity plans for acquiring desired characteristics of catechists according to Ignatian pedagogy paradigm in Thailand is in higher level ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$  S.D. = .258).

Conclusion, the result of all learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand leads to three objectives: 1) Catechists have studied teaching skills and characteristics according to Ignatian pedagogy

paradigm, 2) Catechists could use this teaching skill to prepare lesson plans and use it, and 3) Catechists have further developed teaching skills and desired characteristics according to Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm in Thailand.

Comparison results of pre-post test from the experimental group found that 15 catechists from experimental group (100%) could explain the goal, objective, five teaching skills and nine desired characteristics in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogy Paradigm. Each could prepare at least four lesson plans and use them for their teaching. The result of content analysis from deep interviewed, showed that participants felt that they had become better catechists. They have more inspiration to teach catechism and more trust and faithfulness to God, commitment to do everything for God, caring for individual learners, more reflection and evaluation and putting doctrine into practice in dairy life.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### ***A. Discussion***

1. The need for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand.

The sample group had high need for acquiring both teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists probably because of 3 reasons: 1) Catechists were selected by the authority of the Church and expressly endorsed by various church officials. They also took their positions voluntarily and willingly. Therefore, they would not hesitate to take any opportunity to improve themselves; 2) It is a duty of diocesan catechetical centers to develop catechists in their dioceses. These catechists want to fulfill this duty of their catechetical centers by acquiring both teaching skills and desired characteristics; and 3) The catechists themselves want to acquire new teaching skills and desired characteristics to improve themselves beyond old practices to teach catechism more easily and more adequately. As a result, an opportunity to learn new methods of catechesis would be of the

sample group's interest and expectation. This need for learning and formation of catechists is already underlined in the General Catechetical Directory (1971, n.108) which says that "Any pastoral activity for the carrying out of which there are not at hand persons with the right formation and preparation will necessarily come to nothing. The working tools themselves cannot be effective unless used by catechists who have been rightly formed. Hence, the suitable formation of catechists must come before reform in texts and strengthening of the organization for handling catechesis. First of all, if is necessary that attention be given to the formation of those who carry out catechetical activities on the national level. The duty here belongs to the Conferences of Bishops. Nevertheless, the formation of those who direct catechetical activities on a national level should be joined, as it were with an extension and completion of itself, with the formation of the catechists who carry out this activity on regional and diocesan levels."

2. Learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand.

These learning activity plans consisted of 26 learning activities that took altogether 100 hours during a period of 31 days. There were 14 activities for developing teaching skills and 12 for developing desired characteristics. They were based on Edgar J. Boone's ideas for development of adult education (Boone et al., 2002) which comprise three main steps: planning, design, and evaluation.

The research found that these learning activity plans corresponded to the reality and needs of catechists and respective organizations in Thailand. It started from collecting necessary catechetical data and analyzing them for the following issues: objective, process and fundamental characteristics of catechesis in Thailand, forms of catechesis, sources of the material for catechesis, cultural contexts of catechesis, the pedagogy of faith formation, methods in

catechesis, ministry of catechesis, formation for the service of catechesis, criteria that can inspire the use of human sciences in the formation of catechists, etc. The researcher then analyzed these data and used them as a guideline to develop learning activity plans. This process assures that this research was based on the real situation and need for catechesis in Thailand. According to the teaching of the Catholic Church, General Directory for Catechesis (1997, n. 243), "Various criteria which can inspire the use of human sciences in the formation of catechists ... are: a) Respect for the autonomy of the sciences: "the Church... affirms the legitimate autonomy of culture and especially of the sciences". b) Evangelical discernment of the different tendencies or schools in psychology, sociology, and pedagogy: their values and their limitations. c) The study of the human sciences in the formation of catechists is not an end in itself. Acquiring awareness of the existential, psychological, cultural and social situation of man is accomplished in the light of the faith in which man must be educated. d) In forming catechists, theology and the human sciences should mutually enrich each other. Consequently it is necessary to avoid a situation in which these materials are converted into the only norm for the pedagogy of the faith apart from the theological criteria deriving from the divine pedagogy. While these are fundamental and necessary disciplines, they are always at the service of evangelization which is more than a human activity."

3. Achievement of the experiment on learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists according to Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand.

The learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills of catechists were found to be of high achievement ( $\bar{x} = 4.49$  S.D. = .271). Those for development of desired characteristics were found to be of higher achievement ( $\bar{x} = 4.58$  S.D. = .258).

Catechists, as an experimental group, seemed to value each activity that they had done in this period of time for helping them gain more knowledge and teaching skills. They also found opportunity to reflect on their own lives and works and developed themselves further. All catechists (100%) who participated in these plans indicated that all these activities were necessary for all catechists in Thailand. They realized that to know the contexts of the learners and to love each one of them are the first task of effective teaching. Experience means to taste something internally, which requires them to probe the connotations and overtones of words and events, to analyze and evaluate ideas, and to reason. Reflection means a thoughtful reconsideration of some subject matters, experiences, ideas, purpose or spontaneous reaction, in order to grasp its significance more fully. Action is the test of love and evaluation is a privileged moment for a catechist both to congratulate and encourage students for the progress made, as well as an opportunity to stimulate further reflection in light of blind spots or *lucanae* in the students' point of view. The experiment on learning activity plans for acquiring desired characteristics found that all participants (100%) had developed the characteristic of faithfulness to God. This result may have come from the system of selecting catechists. They were selected by the authority of the Catholic Church. They must believe in God and have a good conduct as well as a good education. This characteristic is the aim of catechists as General Directory for Catechesis (1997, n. 80) states that, "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. All evangelizing activity is understood as promoting communion with Jesus Christ. Starting with the "initial" conversion of a person to the Lord, moved by the Holy Spirit through the primary proclamation of the Gospel, catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence. It proposes to help those who have just converted to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself," and Guide for Catechists (1993, n. 8) says that, "Hence the need for coherence and authenticity of life. Before doing the catechesis one must

first of all be a catechist. The truth of their lives confirms their message. It would be sad if they did not "practice what they preached" and spoke about a God of whom they had theoretical knowledge but with whom they had no contact."

### **B. Conclusion**

"Importance of the formation of Catechists" is outlined in General Directory for Catechesis (1997, n. 234) that "All of these tasks are born of the conviction that the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel. The instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless well used by trained catechists. Thus the adequate formation of catechists cannot be overlooked by concerns such as the updating of texts and the re-organization of catechesis." We dare to say that personnel are more crucial than materials. There is an advantage of being in Thailand because her Constitution allows people to practice religious activities freely. The Catholic Church has established legal and policy developments for catechesis and catechists need to learn new teaching skills and desire to serve more effectively as catechists. This research could respond to their needs. For all these reasons, these learning activity plans for acquiring teaching skills and desired characteristics of catechists in accordance with Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Thailand will help in developing our catechists and take part in building a more peaceful Nation.

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**(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)**

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