

Copyright © 1996
FOR PRESCHOOL THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE
IN PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/CCD PROGRAMS
IN THE DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Secretariat for Education
Diocese of Pittsburgh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	
	A. Secretariat and Project Staff.....	p.1
	B. The Project	p.2-5
	C. Committee.....	p.6
	D. References	p.7
II.	Foundational Principles.....	p.8-16
III.	Curriculum	
	A. Preschool-Sixth Grade	
	Preschool.....	p.17-20
	Kindergarten.....	p.21-24
	First Grade.....	p.25-29
	Second Grade.....	p.30-36
	Penance.....	p.37-44
	Eucharist.....	p.45-54
	Third Grade	p.55-60
	Fourth Grade	p.61-67
	Fifth Grade	p.68-75
	Sixth Grade	p.76-82

B.	Junior High	p.83-103
	Confirmation.....	p.104-107

IV. Background for Catechist

A.	Guidelines Regarding the Human Sciences and Catechetics	p.108-109
B.	Principles of Faith Development	p.110-112
C.	Profile of the Child: Preschool-Sixth Grade	
	Preschool.....	p.113-116
	Kindergarten	p.117-119
	Primary	p.120
	First Grade	p.121-122
	Second Grade	p.123-124
	Third Grade	p.125-126
	Intermediate	p.127
	Fourth Grade	p.128-129
	Fifth Grade	p.130-131
	Sixth Grade	p.132-133
D.	Special Religious Education.....	p.134-140

V. Appendix

Prayers	p.141-146
Concepts.....	p.147-152
Saints and Contemporary Models of Faith.....	p.153-154
Local Treasures	p.155-157

DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, S.T.D.

Bishop of Pittsburgh

Reverend Kris. D. Stubna, S.T.D.

Secretary for Education

PROJECT DIRECTORS:

Mr. Brian M. Keane, M.A.

Director, Department for Religious Education/CCD

Miss Sharon T. Tyborowski, M.S.Ed.

Director, Office for Catechesis

THE PROJECT

CHARGE

In 1992, the Department for Religious Education/CCD was charged with the task of developing a curriculum for parish catechetical programs (CCD)-preschool through grade eight. The development of this curriculum was to complement the one already in place for the parochial schools in the diocese which was implemented in 1987.

PREPARATION

To begin this project, dioceses from across the nation were surveyed regarding catechetical curriculum. The specific request was two-fold: 1) to see if the diocese had developed guidelines for religious education and 2) to see if the diocese would share a copy of its work. Thirty-four dioceses responded by sending copies of their catechetical curriculum materials (see subsequent list).

These documents were studied. Eight were selected for use as primary resources and eight were selected as secondary resources (see subsequent list). Selection of particular curricula as resources resided in the determination that the curriculum had the following qualities:

- Comprehensive in nature.
- Sufficient development and detail in horizontal guidelines, goals and objectives.
- Clarity and consistency in language.
- Degree of practical adaptability and applicability to the specific religious education parish - based format.
- Adequate description of overall philosophy and goals of the catechetical mission and of various components and ministries therein.
- Developed description of both the psychological profile and catechetical needs of the child on each level/in each grade.
- Clear articulation of the purpose of the document, of suggested implementation and of expected outcomes.
- Basis in solid theological/methodological/catechetical norms as established by Church teaching and norms.

In addition, each of the major publishers of catechetical materials was contacted and asked to submit the appropriate scope and sequence charts. Great care was given, as well to the examination and study of the Catholic Schools Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines which are already in place in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Other resources for this project were the major catechetical documents of the Church, namely: The General Catechetical Directory, The National Catechetical Directory, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Teaching of Christ, and The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for The Diocese of Pittsburgh.

FORMATION OF COMMITTEE

In September of 1992, a Plenary Committee was identified (see subsequent list). The committee was given the overall charge to develop the curriculum guidelines under the direction of Mr. Brian Keane, the Director of the Department for Religious Education/CCD. These guidelines would include:

- An overall introduction.
- A profile of the child on each level.
- Learner based objectives.
- Content focus on the four aims of catechesis (message, community, worship, and service) for each grade level.
- Concepts for review.
- Prayers.
- Scripture references.
- Vocabulary.

The Plenary Committee divided itself into grade-level sub-committees to begin the detailed work. Some sub-committees worked on the introductory information, others on specific grade level curricula - preschool through grade six curricula, junior high curricula, curricula for sacramental preparation, and the profile of the child.

For each grade, the message portion of the curriculum is provided in declarative statements. This component outlines in specific terms the Church teaching which the students are expected to know at the completion of each catechetical level/grade. The community, worship, and service portions are written in affective terms. This information is geared toward developing the whole child (an education of the mind, heart, and soul).

The profile of the child was developed to provide background for the catechist. A description is provided of the child at each level which includes the following components: faith, physical, social/emotional, and cognitive development. Notes are provided for the catechist at the beginning of each profile section suggesting how the catechist can appropriately foster such development in the catechetical setting. For a variety of reasons, children of mixed ages are often found in each grade level.

As a result, general profiles of the child are also provided at each major level: primary, intermediate, junior high. A rationale for the importance of background considerations is provided in the Guidelines article that follows, as well as in the background for catechist section.

As this project unfolded, there was ongoing consultation with curriculum experts, as well as with special needs resource personnel. Attention was given to the cultural diversity which constitutes this local Church. The section on Background for Catechists contains an article on specific helps for catechists working with students with disabilities. The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh were integrated into these curricula guidelines as well.

EDITING

Once the work of the subcommittees was completed, the document was edited to assure theological and catechetical completeness and consistency with regard to grammar, language, length, and style. Miss Sharon Tyborowski, Director for Catechesis was appointed to coordinate this effort. Under her direction, the document was then completely indexed to The General Catechetical Directory, The National Catechetical Directory, The Teaching of Christ (4th edition) and The Catechism of the Catholic Church. These references serve as a resource to the catechist toward adult understanding of the subject matter. Finally, appropriate notations have been made to the intersection of this document with The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh regarding catechesis for sacraments. Notations have also been made regarding the timely introduction of the Catholic Vision of Love lesson plans within this curriculum in grades five through eight.

Upon completion of the initial editing, the project was submitted to Father Kris Stubna, Secretary for Education for the review process and ultimate approval.

DIOCESES RESPONDING TO INITIAL SURVEY REGARDING CATECHETICAL CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Albany
Atlanta
Baltimore
Bridgeport
Buffalo
Charlotte
Cleveland
Columbus
Corpus Christi
Des Moines
Dubuque
Fort Wayne-South Bend
Galveston-Houston
Gary
Great Falls-Billings
Green Bay
Lafayette (Indiana)

Lansing
Las Cruces
Little Rock
Metuchen
Minneapolis-St. Paul
Mobile
New Orleans
New York
Orange
Paterson
Raleigh
Savannah
Scranton
St. Petersburg
Trenton
Washington
Wilmington

DIOCESAN CURRICULA UTILIZED AS PRIMARY RESOURCES

Buffalo
Cleveland (adopted also by Atlanta)
Columbus
Fort Wayne-South Bend

Little Rock
New York (adopted by
several other dioceses)
Paterson
Washington

DIOCESAN CURRICULA UTILIZED AS SECONDARY RESOURCES

Baltimore
Corpus Christi
Galveston-Houston
Gary

Lansing
Minneapolis-St. Paul
New Orleans
Savannah

COMMITTEE

Mrs. Laetitia Bridges
Mrs. Mary Ann Budd
Sr. Theresa Codispoti, OSF
Sr. Virginia Cummings, OSF
Ms. Mary Lou Danieli
Rev. Kevin Dominik
Ms. Lori Ellis
Mrs. Sharon Rodish-Fitzpatrick
Mrs. Joyce Gillooly
Ms. Phyllis Haney
Mrs. Patricia James
Mr. Brian Keane
Sr. Kathleen Kelly, SSND
Mrs. Nancy Kenny
Mrs. Judy Kirk

Mrs. Janie LaFrankie
Mrs. Eleanor Marshall
Mrs. Mary Lou Marshall
Ms. Carole Obrokta
Mrs. Patricia Ogilvie
Mrs. JoAnn Paradise
Mrs. Jennifer Rush
Mr. Victor Satter
Mrs. Margretta Stokes-Tucker
Mrs. Barbara Trepal
Mrs. Susan Walsh
Mrs. Maureen Wood *(served on committee
until diocesan appointment as Director for
Family Life & Family Concerns)

CONSULTANTS

Curriculum:

Mrs. Tootie Betres (Curriculum instructor,
Slippery Rock University)

Persons with Disabilities:

Ms. Grace Harding (Director, Department for
Persons with Disabilities)

Special Needs and Cultural Diversity Concerns:

Mrs. Eleanor Marshall (Director, Office for
Persons with Mental Retardation and Special
Religious Education)

Mrs. Margretta Stokes-Tucker (Director, Black
Catholic Ministries)

Youth (Particularly) Junior High Needs):

Mrs. Joyce Gillooly (Director, Office for Youth
and Young Adult Ministry)

Catholic Schools Curriculum:

Sr. Ursula Kelly, SSND (Consultant for
Elementary School Catechesis)

Sacramental Curriculum:

Rev. M. Eric Diskin (Director, Office for
Worship and Office for Evangelization and
Christian Initiation)

REFERENCES

- CCC** The Catechism of the Catholic Church. English Translation. United States Catholic Conference (Washington, D.C. 1994) - Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- CJC** Code of Canon Law (1983).
- CVOL** The Catholic Vision of Love. A Curriculum for Christian Education in Sexuality and the Family. Reverend Kris D. Stubna, S.T.D. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division (Indiana, 1996).
- CT** Catechesi Tradendae ("On Catechesis in Our Time"). Apostolic Exhortation. Pope John Paul II (Rome, 1979).
- DV** Dei Verbum ("Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation"). Second Vatican Council (Rome, November 18, 1965).
- EV** Evangelium Vitae ("The Gospel of Life"). Encyclical Letter. Pope John Paul II (Rome, 1995).
- GCD** General Catechetical Directory. Sacred Congregation for the Clergy (Rome, 1971).
- GDC** General Directory for Catechesis. Sacred Congregation the Clergy (Rome, 1997).
- GDSCM** Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials. United States Catholic Conference (Washington, D.C., 1990).
- LG** Lumen Gentium ("Dogmatic Constitution on the Church"). Second Vatican Council (Rome, November 16, 1964).
- NCD** Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States. Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference (Washington D.C., 1979).
- NSC** National Statutes for the Catechumenate (USA).
- RCIA** Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1988 edition).
- SC** Sacrosanctum Concilium ("Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy"). Second Vatican Council (Rome, December 4, 1963).
- SIP** The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh (June, 1995).
- TTOC** The Teaching of Christ. A Catholic Catechism for Adults. Edited by Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., Thomas Comerford Lawler. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division (Indiana, 1995) 4th edition.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of catechesis is to make a person's "faith become living, conscious, and active, through the light of instruction" (Vatican Council II: Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church, 14). In a continuing effort to teach authentically the Gospel, the bishop, assisted at all levels by parents, priests, directors for religious education, and catechists, ensures that catechetical goals and priorities are established by the Church community, that the necessary structures exist, and that appropriate programs are designated, carried out, and evaluated (NCD #218, CCC #5, CCC - Apostolic Constitution p. 5 #3).

PHILOSOPHY OF THE DOCUMENT

Catechesis speaks to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples of all people, to help them "believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ" (CCC #4; see also CT #1,2). Catechesis imparts the doctrine of the faith in an "organic and systematic way with a view to initiating the learners into the fullness of Christian life" (CCC #5).

In this formative process that begins at birth, parents are given the profound privilege and serious obligation of being the child's first and best teachers of the faith. Most of the religious attitudes and values children acquire come from their parents and the home. The family is the first place where faith is learned, interpreted, and lived. It is the right of all children to have loving parents to support them in their development. "Parents communicate values and attitudes by sharing love for Christ and His Church and each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its spirit, and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships" (NCD #212, CCC #2225-6). To help parents in this important responsibility, the Church understands its obligation to support and assist these parents in their family's faith journey.

The Church of Pittsburgh, in an effort to be faithful in its mission to teach, understands that the "aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ" (CT #19, CCC #426). This document provides catechetical curriculum guidelines for parents and catechists concerning the religious formation of children preschool through eighth grades in parish religious education programs who attend private and/or public schools.

These guidelines have been developed in light of the special needs and circumstances of this distinct community within our parishes. Religious education for children who attend private and/or public schools presents special challenges. The limited amount of time for catechesis our children experience in a formal setting maximizes the need for quality catechesis. Faced also with the reality that a number of our children have limited contact with our parish community outside this formal setting, it becomes a matter of extreme importance that they are nurtured in an atmosphere of welcoming and acceptance. Due to family circumstances, children sometimes attend religious education in a parish that is not their worshipping community. This can lead to further isolation and an inability to claim an identity as a Catholic. These children are often enrolled in programs which share physical space with others, whether in a parish or public facility. This can also lead to a sense of non-belonging in their parish community. Finally, their catechists, who have a deep sense of their vocation to this ministry, are often not professionally trained educators. There is a great need, then, to equip these volunteer catechists with the professional skills necessary for classroom management and developmental sensitivities.

To address these particular needs and concerns, parishes have developed various formats for religious education. In addition to the usual classroom setting in a parish school of religion model, other models for catechesis are emerging: family centered catechesis, lectionary-based catechesis, small faith sharing communities, Liturgy of the Word for children, and family neighborhood clusters. These alternative models are being studied closely to determine their effectiveness in fulfilling the catechetical mission.

These guidelines are intended to provide a basic set of expectations for each grade level. It is important to note that these guidelines state the minimal requirements of a student at a particular grade level. Although parish religious education formats vary, it is the expectation of the diocese that by the stated grade level a student would be able to articulate the foundational beliefs expressed.

The National Catechetical Directory offers us an integrated vision of catechesis. "This ministry is trinitarian and christocentric in scope and spirit, consciously emphasizing the mystery of God and the plan of salvation which leads to the Father through the Son, in the Holy Spirit...The most important task of such catechesis is to provide, through the witness of committed adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith" (NCD #47, CCC #426).

The four dimensions of catechesis provided in the National Catechetical Directory remind us that the formation of a Catholic person is the privilege and responsibility of the entire community. Thus, every religious education program should include:

THE MINISTRY OF WORD The source of catechesis, which is also its content, is one: God's word, fully revealed in Jesus Christ and at work in the lives of people exercising their faith under the guidance of the magisterium (GCD #45, CCC #5, CCC #2688). "At the heart of catechesis we find the Person of Jesus of Nazareth" (CT #5). The

primary and essential object of catechesis is the mystery of Christ. The character of catechesis has the two-fold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciples of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ (CT #19). All good catechesis inspires the disciple to search for even greater knowledge. It is vital to hand on to our children a knowledge of the faith that is reasonable and provides for them a source of meaning for their lives. It must deal with all the essentials in a systematic way.

THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY "Such a community catechizes its members by its very life and work, giving witness in a multitude of ways to God's love as revealed and communicated to us in Christ" (NCD #45, CCC #7). In the formation of a disciple, the community by its very nature teaches and models what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The community supports a child's faith journey by offering an atmosphere of acceptance and welcome. In public worship the community expresses its desire to become more and more the visible sign of the presence of Jesus in this world. In this family the child sees, and therefore seeks, a love of the Word, a dedication to the life of service, a reverence for the living presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Practically, a community financially is called to support religious education by providing qualified personnel and resources necessary for teaching the faith. Finally, a community must always be in the process of discernment that calls forth those individuals who are given the authority to teach in the name of the parish, as well as providing the many volunteers it needs for various programs.

THE MINISTRY OF WORSHIP "The liturgy and sacraments are the supreme celebration of the paschal mystery. They express the sanctification of human life. As efficacious signs which mediate God's loving, saving power, they accomplish the saving acts which they symbolize" (NCD #44, CCC #1074). Catechesis necessarily flows from and leads to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist which is the "summit toward which all the activity of the Church is directed" and "the font from which all her power flows" (SC 10). The deepening of faith consequently leads one to a more profound appreciation of the sacraments and the need to live a full sacramental life in the Church.

THE MINISTRY OF SERVICE "Concern for and ministry to the poor, disadvantaged, helpless and hopeless are signs that the Church is a servant" (NCD #45, CCC #2443-4, 2448). The work of catechesis is to offer the vision that service to our brothers and sisters is not an option of the Christian life, but integral to the Gospel. As the 1971 Synod of Bishops reminded us, "social justice is a constitutive element of the Gospel message." All catechetical activity should include opportunities for serving the Church, at the local, national, and the universal levels, as well as serving the needs of our brothers and sisters everywhere.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING CATECHESIS

FAMILY LIFE

God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution and dignity. "A man and woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family" (CCC #2202). The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. As such it has been named "the domestic church" (Lumen Gentium #11), "the privileged community" (CCC #2206) and "the original cell of social life" (CCC #2207). Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church makes clear: "The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (CCC #2221).

A faith filled family, then, is the primary foundation upon which any religious education program must be built. Unfortunately, not all families are aware of the importance of their role as the primary educators of their children. The parish must do all within its power to bring families to this awareness. Especially in light of this role, the parish must recognize that there exists in the world today family structures that include single-parent, extended, or blended families which combine two previous systems into one. As noted in Sharing the Light of Faith, "There is a particularly urgent need for analysis of the current status of the family, the roles of men and woman within the family and society generally, and the alterations brought about by social and economic changes" (NCD #29). Family breakdown, marital tension, poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, financial pressures, illness, death or relocation, and other difficulties can, at least temporarily, weaken a family's ability to nurture faith.

At these times it is important for the parish community and especially the catechists to find effective means of communication with the parents. Parents should be encouraged to take an active part in the everyday religious experience of their children. Opportunities must be presented for the parents to make them more conscious of their role and more effective in fulfilling it. This can happen if the family has an understanding of what is being taught, the methods used in teaching, and the programs available which assist and support the family in its roles. Parents should have a direct role in planning programs for their children "realizing that they have an obligation to catechize according to the teaching authority of the Church" (CCC #2223-2226, 2229; NCD #212).

Statistics indicate that the number of religiously indifferent parents seems to have grown in the United States in recent years and the interaction between parents and children in all spheres has decreased significantly.

In view of the intrinsic importance of parents and family in transmitting cultural and religious attitudes and values, this isolation of infants, children, and youth poses major problems for catechesis....Catechists can at least make parents aware of the problem and its consequences, and encourage as much interaction as possible between them and their children (NCD #197).

CHURCH LIFE

"At every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all ... into the unity of his family, the Church" (CCC #1). As the Second Vatican Council made clear, the deepest vocation of the Church is to draw all God's people into communion and unity in Christ Jesus (LG #51).

The definitive aim of catechesis is "to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ" (CT #5) and with his body, the Church. However, a particular challenge that the Church faces in its catechetical ministry today is the lack of community which exists in the human family. The causes of this problem are many.

The post Vatican II Church is still perceived as a paradox by many believers and even more by non-believers. Believers who react too simplistically are scandalized when they cannot reconcile the human frailty and weakness within the Church with their idealized image. Others at the opposite end of the spectrum, stumble as a result of their education when they allow individual and secular moral views to replace the message of Jesus Christ. Unresolved tensions still exist which have left some at the parish level marginalized, alienated, confused, and apprehensive.

In this environment, it is essential to recall that the General Catechetical Directory understands adult catechesis as the summit of the entire catechetical enterprise (GCD #20). "This is the principal form of catechesis because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form" (CT #43).

Every possible effort must be made to encourage and to facilitate the ongoing task of evangelization and adult education. This is particularly necessary with regard to young adults, those preparing for marriage, and pre- and post-baptismal catechesis with young parents.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Catechesis continues to be confronted by many challenges emerging from within contemporary society. A growing secularism, an aggrandized personal freedom and egoism, increasing moral relativism, the disarming forces of the media, a growing mobility of peoples which disintegrates family life, a sense of apathy and complacency among some - all these challenges work against the journey toward holiness and unity.

With its ability to produce immediate news from around the globe, the media has desensitized us to the pain of poverty, the anguish of war, or the desperation of those who rely on us for aid. In many instances the media has replaced parents as the primary communicator of values to our children. Television programming, movies, music, and other multi-media sources continue to portray sexual immorality, violence, drug abuse, and alcoholism as an accepted and sometimes sought after part of society.

Computer technology and software have given our children command of a tremendous amount of information with little or no value base. Entertainment has replaced education in the lives of many in our society. All of these issues affect the formation of our children and need to be taken seriously if we truly seek to teach the heart and mind of Jesus. The ability to provide quality catechesis in the face of these realities is a constant challenge. For these reasons, in particular, the presentation and fostering of the Catholic Vision of Love, which includes media literacy and an education to chastity has become a particular integral dimension of parish catechetical programs in our diocese.

CATECHESIS AT THE PARISH LEVEL

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR

The bishop has the primary responsibility for catechesis within the diocese. He entrusts pastors with preaching the gospel and sharing in the responsibility of catechesis. In his role as the principal teacher of his local parish community, the pastor must first be sensitive to the needs of the parish. He must challenge his people to live their baptismal call to a lifelong conversion, a lifelong journey in faith (CCC #2033). The pastor needs to be a visible presence, who fosters the vision that religious education is the work of the whole community (CCC #2038). It is his attitude of hospitality and welcome that shapes the hearts and minds of those he shepherds.

Because the pastor may find it impossible to be solely responsible for this work, he must often provide the parish with qualified personnel such as a director for religious education or coordinator for religious education who can assist him in this catechetical work. The pastor empowers all catechists: catechetical administrators, parents, and teachers of the faith in every aspect of the life of the parish (CCC #904, 906). These catechists include those in formal religious education such as the RCIA, the Catechumate for Children, the

formal school setting, the parish school of religion, and those in all other forms of religious education as noted above.

**THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (DRE)
OR COORDINATOR FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CRE)**

The director for religious education (DRE) or coordinator for religious education (CRE) assists the pastor in forming and implementing a vision of religious education for the total community. Some of the responsibilities of the director for religious education or coordinator for religious education can include:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- administers the religious education program
- calls and presides over regular and special meetings of the staff of the parish religious education program

EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- empowers parents in their role as primary educators of their children through family catechetical and sacramental preparation programs
- raises the consciousness of the entire parish with regard to the ministry of catechesis, the required support of and participants in this ministry, and its particular need for commitment to adult catechesis
- works to provide excellence in the quality of the catechetical program
- recruits, forms, and supports volunteer catechists, aides, and helpers for various levels of religious education either directly or indirectly
- provides opportunities to deepen the spiritual life of catechists and students
- insures the implementation of all diocesan and Church guidelines and regulations with regard to catechetics

RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITIES

- coordinates the use of effective resources: text materials, reference texts, supplies, audio visuals, and equipment

- resources the content of programs, implementation of texts, and teaching techniques in cooperation with catechists, other necessary people at the parish level, and the appropriate diocesan offices
 - researches and provides guidance for the initiation, direction, and organization of various programs
 - advises the Education Committee of the Parish Council
-

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- supervises and evaluates the operation of the programs, personnel, activities, and facilities
 - supervises the keeping of records and the work of the religious education office
 - sends periodic reports to the appropriate diocesan offices
-

PUBLIC RELATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

- meets regularly and establishes a rapport with the Pastor, and/or his delegate(s), to inform them of matters concerning the parish religious education program and to discuss the same with them
- meets regularly and communicates with the school principal(s), where applicable
- assumes responsibility for promoting good public relations with the local parish organizations, and especially with public schools, in matters pertaining to religious education
- serves as a liaison between the parish and deanery, diocesan, and regional personnel in the area of parish religious education

In many parishes a person who is not a professional director for religious education has been given the catechetical responsibilities in their community. While these dedicated persons are committed to deepening the community's life of faith, they may not have been given the opportunity to develop the professional skills necessary for this essential work. It is the policy of the Diocese of Pittsburgh that every parish staff would include a professional trained director for religious education, to the extent that financial resources allow.

THE ROLE OF CATECHIST

A catechist is anyone who participates formally or informally in a person's religious formation. Some, however, are called to more specific roles.

A catechist who teaches in the name of the Church, however, is one called and commissioned by the Church with a special responsibility. For it is not the catechist who teaches but Christ who teaches in him or her.

"Whatever be the level of his responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus. He will not seek to keep directed towards himself and his personal opinions and attitudes the attention and the consent of the mind and heart of the person he is catechizing. Above all, he will not try to inculcate his personal opinions and options as if they expressed Christ's teaching and the lessons of his life. Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.' Saint Paul did this when he was dealing with a question of prime importance: 'I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you.' What assiduous study of the word of God transmitted by the Church's Magisterium, what profound familiarity with Christ and with the Father, what a spirit of prayer, what detachment from self must a catechist have in order that he can say: 'My teaching is not mine!' " (CT #6).

A person who is called to teach in the name of the Church is someone who speaks from the depths of their own personal faith journey. This presupposes a deeply spiritual and religious life. A life of prayer, an openness to the Word of God in the Scriptures, an intense love for the Church and her teachings, and a commitment to the Church that includes a full sacramental life are the "pearls of great price" a teacher is called to share with their students.

While these qualities are at the core of a catechist's life, "the summit and center of catechetical formation lies in an aptitude and ability to communicate the Gospel message." A catechist must possess the unambiguous commitment to convey the truths of the faith in a clear and consistent manner (GCD #111). Also needed are the skills necessary to effectively teach the heart and mind of Christ as proclaimed in the teaching of the Church. Training in theology as well as classroom management and pedagogy are essential elements in a catechist's preparation and formation (CCC #906).

Equipped with the necessary skills, a catechist is able to proclaim the Good News with a conviction and joy that can help inform the mind, affect the will, and shape the heart of every student.

Note: The first reference after each quote designates the source from which the quote was taken. The second reference after the quotes indicates where this same subject is dealt with in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

PRESCHOOL

Theme: Our love for God's gifts and our sense of wonder grow as we become more aware of God's creation. God made each of us someone special. Each of us wonders about ourselves and other living things. ALL people and living things can be signs of God's goodness to us.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR PRESCHOOL, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ We become aware of God through nature, people, and events in daily life GCD #45; NCD #55; TTOC pp.32, 33 & 34, 38; CCC #32-34, 41, 51-53, 293.
- ❖ We are grateful to God our loving Father and Creator for all the beautiful gifts He has given us NCD #140; TTOC p.337; CCC #224, 341, 357 & 358.
- ❖ We proclaim and experience the love and care of God NCD #55, 92; TTOC pp.34, 36-37, 59; CCC #301, 303.
- ❖ As a child of God each of us shares God's life in a special way NCD #116; TTOC pp.326, 409; CCC #355, 356.
- ❖ God has something special in life for each of us to do GCD #66 & 78; NCD #177 & 180; TTOC p.316; CCC #2226.
- ❖ God made ALL people of every age, race, culture, and ability NCD #156, 157; TTOC pp.56, 294; CCC #225, 360, 361, 1934.
- ❖ ..God made each of us to love Him, and be His child now and always NCD #84, 86; TTOC p.21; CCC #1, 163, 1023.

- ❖ God has given us the ability to make and do many things NCD #17, 19, 85; TTOC pp.57, 60 & 61; CCC #307, 2427-2428.
- ❖ God created each of us as a helper and co-worker NCD #156, 160; TTOC pp.56 & 57, 60-61; CCC #307, 372-373, 1879, 1931-1932.
- ❖ Our parents who give us life, love, care, and provide for us are a very special and wonderful gift from God NCD #177; TTOC pp.296, 298, 299-300; CCC #2215.
- ❖ Playmates and classmates are meant to be our friends TTOC pp.56 & 57, 59; CCC #1878, 1879.
- ❖ Friends are also gifts from God NCD #102, 158; TTOC p.59; CCC #1878, 1879.
- ❖ God is the maker of the world and of all created things NCD #51; TTOC pp.41, 42-43; CCC #338.
- ❖ God loves us and keeps us in His care at all times NCD #55, 85; TTOC pp.36 & 37; CCC #301, 303, 305.
- ❖ God is all-loving and all-forgiving NCD #124, 125; TTOC pp.36-37, 70-71; CCC #211, 218-221, 733.
- ❖ Prayer is talking to God NCD #140; TTOC p.336; CCC #2559.
- ❖ We are called to pray every day GCD #25; NCD #140; TTOC p.343; CCC #2659, 2660.
- ❖ Jesus listened to and talked to people in a loving way NCD #53, 154; TTOC pp.109 -110; CCC #458, 459.
- ❖ Mary is the Mother of Jesus NCD #106; TTOC pp.89-90; CCC #495.

- ❖ Sacred images, e.g. statues, pictures, crucifix, are reminders of God's presence in our lives NCD #147; TTOC pp.365-366, 499-500; CCC #1667-1668, 1674, 2132.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Experience God's love for His people by celebrating feasts, listening to Bible stories, and having conversations about God.
- Experience love and desire to love in return.
- Understand self as someone special.
- Appreciate all living things as good because God made them.
- Value good behavior as something to be imitated.
- Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.
- Understand that God's presence is experienced through parents and other caring adults.
- Become aware of the Church as a place where God is specially present and different members of God's family gather.
- Understand that Jesus' feelings, e.g. happiness at being welcomed, rejection by friends, sadness over death, are like our own.

WORSHIP

- Value the Bible as a special book that tells us about God's love.
- Participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration.
- Participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers,
e.g. "Thank You, God,"
"I Love You, God,"
"For my family, Lord hear our prayer."
- Experience prayer alone and with others.
- Become aware of the priest as a special person who represents Jesus and leads us in prayer.
- Participate in celebrations for special seasons, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving.
- Experience the Mass as a very special celebration of God's people.

SERVICE

- Participate in activities that show we care for the things God made.
- Develop ways to treat friends kindly.
- Explore ways to care for family and friends.
- Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share.
- Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Genesis 1:1-24,31	... Creation
Mark 10:14	... Let the children come to Me
Matthew 28:20	... I am always with you
Colossians 3:16b, 17	... Always be thankful
Luke 2:4-20	... Jesus' Birth and the Visit of the Shepherds
John 20:1-8, 11-16	... Easter Story

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

Bible	Creator	God	prayer
celebrate	crib	Jesus	priest
Christmas	crucifix	Joseph	statue
Church	Easter	Mary	thanksgiving
creation	forgive	praise	

PRAYERS

Simple prayers, for example:

Jesus, I Love You

Thank You, God

Sign of the Cross

Prayer before meals (optional)

KINDERGARTEN

Theme: God calls us to celebrate His love for us through His gifts of creation. Jesus reveals God's love for us and teaches us to love God, ourselves and others. We, God's family, continue to build God's Kingdom through our worship and by helping other people.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR KINDERGARTEN, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ God is the loving Creator of all things NCD #51; TTOC pp. 41-43; CCC #293, 338.
- ❖ God created each person and loves them as they are NCD #156, 158; TTOC pp.53, 56-57, 294; CCC #357, 1936-1937.
- ❖ God gives us many people to love NCD #102; TTOC p.56; CCC #1878.
- ❖ God shows love for us through the love of our parents, friends, priests, brothers or sisters GCD #78, NCD #177 & 180; CCC #2222, 2223, 2226.
- ❖ God calls us to grow closer to Him each day, to love Him more and more TTOC p.343; CCC #2697.
- ❖ The Bible is a special book that tells us about God's love NCD #60; TTOC p.485; CCC #104.
- ❖ Jesus came to teach us to love God, ourselves, and ALL people of every race, age, culture, and ability NCD #90, 91; TTOC pp.24, 109-110, 230-231; CCC #775, 776,1934-1937.
- ❖ Jesus is God's Son and He reveals God's love to us NCD #87, 90; TTOC pp. 87-88; CCC #442, 458.
- ❖ We communicate with God through different prayer experiences NCD #140, 141;

TTOC p.336; CCC Particularly #2688 and all of Part IV.

- ❖ Mary is Jesus' mother and our mother NCD #106; TTOC pp.201-202; CCC #495, 963.
- ❖ Joseph is the foster father of Jesus and husband of Mary TTOC p.208.
- ❖ Mary, Jesus, and Joseph are called the Holy Family TTOC pp.207-208; CCC #564.
- ❖ We become members of God's family through baptism NCD #116; TTOC p.409; CCC #804, 1213, 1267.
- ❖ During the Mass, Jesus is with us in a special way NCD #120; TTOC p.368; CCC #1373.
- ❖ The Mass is a special meal that Jesus celebrates with His family NCD #120, 121; TTOC pp. 368, 379-380; CCC #1329.
- ❖ In the Mass, we remember that Jesus gave his life for our happiness NCD #120; TTOC p. 368; CCC #1364-1365.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Explore God's creation and our responsibilities for people and all living things.
- Name ways God has shown His love for each of us.
- Appreciate the special persons that God has given us to love, particularly our parents, family, teachers, priest, and friends.
- Appreciate the need to belong to God's family.

WORSHIP

- Participate with God's family at Mass.

- Participate in different ways of giving thanks to God for creation, family, and ourselves.
- Experience God's presence through the following: song, dance, listening, gestures, reflections, silence, short spontaneous prayer.
- Participate with God's family at the Sunday Liturgy.
- Participate in formal prayer.
- Participate in various prayer celebrations for the seasons of advent, Christmas, lent and Easter within class time, and in parish gatherings.
- Encourage prayer celebrations at home.

SERVICE

- Participate in activities that show we care for God's creation.
- Explore ways to show respect for ALL people.
- Develop a sense of gratitude for people who care for us.
- Appreciate people who are models of love and service in our community.
- Encourage activities that are helpful at home, school, church, and community as a way to show our love and gratitude for God.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Genesis 1:1-25	... Creation
Genesis 1:26-31	... Creation of Man & Woman
Luke 1:26-31	... Annunciation
Luke 2:1-20	... Birth of Jesus
Luke 2:41-51	... Finding in the Temple
Mark 1:16-20	... Calling of Disciples
Luke 10:25-37	... Good Samaritan
Luke 17:11-19	... Grateful Leper
Luke 18:15-17	... Jesus and the Children
Mark 5:35-43	... Miracle of Jairus' Daughter
Mark 6:31-44	... Loaves & Fishes
Luke 11:1-4	... Lord's Prayer
Luke 22:14-20	... Last Supper
Luke 23:33-47	... Death of Jesus

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

advent	Christmas	Holy Family	lent
amen	cross	Jesus	Mary
baptism	Easter	Joseph	Mass
Bible	God	last supper	prayer

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Blessing before meals (optional)

FIRST GRADE

Theme: God our Father shows His love through the many gifts of creation. Jesus, God's Son and our brother, teaches us about the Father. Jesus sends us His Holy Spirit to be our helper. We become members of the Catholic Church through baptism.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE-AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR FIRST GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ God is a loving Father NCD #91; TTOC pp. 36-37, 261; CCC #239.
- ❖ There are three persons in the Blessed Trinity NCD #83; TTOC pp. 153-154; CCC #253-255.
- ❖ God is the loving Creator of all things NCD #51; TTOC pp. 41-43; CCC #293, 338.
- ❖ Jesus is the Son of God, our brother, and teacher NCD #87, 91; TTOC pp. 75, 178- 179; CCC #240, 422, 427, 458, 2782.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to give us gifts of peace, strength, and joy NCD #90; TTOC pp. 137, 419, 421; CCC #728-730, 736.
- ❖ Through baptism we are made sons and daughters of God and we become part of God's family NCD #116; TTOC 409; CCC #804, 1213, 1267.
- ❖ We can grow to become loving parents, single people, priests, brothers or sisters GCD #66; NCD #94; TTOC p.313; CCC #825.
- ❖ God's family includes people of every race, age, culture, and ability NCD #156, 157; TTOC p.294; CCC #225, 360, 361, 775-776, 1934-1935.
- ❖ We belong to the Catholic Church NCD #93, 94; TTOC p.156; CCC #830-833.

- ❖ Special parts of the Church are the crucifix, altar, tabernacle, baptismal font, holy water font, reconciliation rooms or confessionals TTOC pp. 365-366; CCC #1182-1185.
- ❖ The Eucharist is both a special meal that Jesus shares with us and a sacrifice of his love NCD #120, 121; TTOC pp. 368, 379-380; CCC #1382-1383.
- ❖ During the Eucharist (Mass), we remember what Jesus said and did at the last supper before he suffered and died for us on the cross NCD #120, 121; TTOC p.372; CCC #1365.
- ❖ During the Mass, Jesus is with us in a special way NCD #120; TTOC p.368; CCC #1373.
- ❖ God always forgives us if we ask and are sorry; God gave us a special sacrament of penance NCD #124; TTOC pp. 424-425; CCC #1431, 1432, 1439, 1847.
- ❖ Reconciliation is a special way God shows his love and forgiveness NCD #124; TTOC p.421; CCC #1422, 1440.
- ❖ Mary is the mother of Jesus, and Joseph is his foster father NCD #106; TTOC pp. 89, 208; CCC #495, 532.
- ❖ Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are called the Holy Family TTOC p. 208; CCC #533, 564.
- ❖ Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus NCD #144; TTOC pp. 75-76; CCC #525.
- ❖ Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus NCD #144; TTOC p.124; CCC #640, 642, 1169.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Be aware of God's creation and recognize ourselves as unique and special parts of creation.
- Understand ways that God has shown us love.
- Appreciate the different groups to which we belong.
- Value our own family and extended family.
- Become aware that baptism makes us part of the larger family of God.
- Develop a sense of belonging to our parish community.
- Participate in special events with the parish such as the patron saint's feast, holiday customs, and blessings.
- Become aware of ministries in the parish, i.e., pastor, parochial vicar, director for religious education, catechist, lector, cantor, eucharistic minister, altar server.
- Appreciate the holiness of family life.

WORSHIP

- Participate in weekly prayer.
- Participate in prayer services celebrating: God's creation, baptism, and forgiveness.
- Participate with all other Catholics in Sunday Mass where we hear God's Word and share the body and blood of Jesus.
- Understand the priest as the person chosen by God to represent Christ in the Church and who leads us in prayer at Mass.
- Participate in different forms of prayer, i.e., quiet reflection, guided meditation, song, spontaneous, petition, thanksgiving, praise, and sorrow.
- Participate in formal prayer.
- Participate in activities for advent and lent to appreciate the significance of these liturgical seasons, e.g., advent wreath, stations of the cross for children.

SERVICE

- Become aware of the ways people care for us.
- Explore ways we can show we care for all of God's creation.
- Understand that we must love ALL people, even those who are different from us.
- Value Jesus as a model for the way we all should live.
- Understand saints as people who lived lives of holiness and service in God's name.
- Participate in advent and lenten activities that reach out to the wider community.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Genesis 1:1-2:4	... Creation
Luke 1:26-56	... Annunciation
Luke 2:1-20	... Nativity
Matthew 2:9b-11	... Epiphany
Luke 10:25-37	... Good Samaritan
Luke 19:1-10	... Zaccheaus
Luke 2:40-52	... Finding in the Temple
Mark 10:13-16	... Jesus Blesses the Children
Luke 11:1-4	... Lord's Prayer
Matthew 21:1-11	... Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem
Matthew 26:26-29	... Last Supper
Luke 22:14-20	... Last Supper
John 20:1-18	... Jesus Rises from the Dead and Appears to the Disciples
Luke 24:49	... Pentecost/Holy Spirit

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

advent	Christmas	Holy Spirit	Mass
altar	Church	Jesus	parish
baptism	create	Joseph	prayer
Bible	family	last supper	priest
Catholic	forgiveness	lent	saint
Christ	God	Mary	tabernacle
Christian	godparent		

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Prayer before and after meals (optional)

SECOND GRADE

Theme: We meet Jesus in the sacraments of Eucharist and of penance. The Eucharist is the center of our life. We learn that the Eucharist is that special bread and wine that through the priest's blessing become the body and blood of Jesus and our source of spiritual nourishment and strength for the body and soul. Reconciliation is a celebration of God's love and forgiveness. In the sacrament of penance, through the priest, God forgives our sins, gives us his grace, and helps us to become more like Jesus.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall the Blessed Trinity and name the three persons.
- Recall the sacrament of baptism as the sacrament in which we become part of God's family.
- Recall the gifts Jesus gives us: a sharing in God's life through baptism; His forgiveness in the sacrament of penance; His body and blood in the Eucharist.
- Recite these prayers:
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Glory Be
 - Prayer before and after meals (optional)

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR SECOND GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ Jesus is the Son of God, who became man NCD #47, 89; TTOC pp. 80-81, 82-83; CCC #422-423, 461, 463, 470.

- ❖ Jesus died on the cross to save ALL people NCD #87; TTOC p.121; CCC #604-605.
- ❖ Jesus' obedience to the Father is a sign and model for our life NCD #90; TTOC p.115; CCC #532, 606-607.
- ❖ Jesus is still present today in the Word, and in the Church, most especially in the Eucharist NCD #54; TTOC pp. 359-360; CCC #1088, 1373.
- ❖ We become members of God's family through baptism NCD #116; TTOC p.409; CCC #804, 1213, 1267.
- ❖ God made each of us to grow up and help others in our own special way as a married person and parent, a single person, a sister or brother, or a priest GCD #66; NCD #94; TTOC p.313; CCC #873.
- ❖ When Jesus ascended to His Father He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us always NCD #92; TTOC pp.133-134; CCC #669, 690.
- ❖ Jesus gave us special gifts of his presence: a sharing in God's life through baptism, his forgiveness in the sacrament of penance and his body and blood in the Eucharist NCD #60f; TTOC p.382; CCC #1373.
- ❖ God gives us his voice in our hearts - our conscience - so that we can choose to do what God calls us to do NCD #103; TTOC p.55; CCC #1777.
- ❖ When we follow our conscience as God made it, then we are truly free and happy NCD #102-103; TTOC pp. 55, 251; CCC #1733.
- ❖ God gave us the law of love: to love God and to love others as one's self NCD #154; TTOC pp. 248-249; CCC #2055.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit helps us to make good choices NCD #91; TTOC pp. 141-142; CCC #1742.
- ❖ Sin is a break in our relationship with God NCD #98; TTOC pp. 262-264; CCC #386,

1487, 1850.

- ❖ If we are sorry, and we seek God's forgiveness in the sacrament of penance, God will always forgive us when we sin NCD #124; TTOC p.424; CCC #1847.
- ❖ God wants us to forgive others NCD #125; TTOC pp. 423-426; CCC #1469, 1829.
- ❖ Jesus gave the priest the power to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance NCD #124; TTOC pp. 421, 424; CCC #1461, 1495.
- ❖ In the sacrament of penance we express sorrow for our sins and we are forgiven NCD #124; TTOC p.432; CCC #1448, 1449-1460.
- ❖ Jesus gave us himself in the Eucharist at the last supper NCD #120; TTOC pp. 371-372; CCC #610.
- ❖ In the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus continues to give himself to us in the bread and wine that become his body and blood NCD #121; TTOC p.372; CCC #1333.
- ❖ We receive Jesus so that we can become more like Jesus NCD #121; TTOC p. 368; CCC #460, 752, 1068.
- ❖ The Eucharistic Liturgy (Mass) is the most important prayer of the Church NCD #121, 140; TTOC pp. 360-361, 368; CCC #1324.
- ❖ The parts of the Mass are: listening to God's Word, offering ourselves with Jesus to the Father, and receiving Jesus in communion NCD #121; TTOC p.353; CCC #1346.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Value the family's role of sharing life, welcoming each other, teaching, and protecting.
- Understand the Church as the community of Jesus' followers gathered by the Spirit.
- Accept one's self as belonging to the family of God.
- Value Sunday as the "Lord's day" when we gather to offer praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Appreciate the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass as a way of joining our prayers with those of the local community and our Church family throughout the world.
- Understand there are different ministries in the Church: eucharistic ministers, lectors, ministers of hospitality, altar servers.
- Participate in events that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as the anniversary of the dedication of the parish church, the feast of the patron saint of the parish.

WORSHIP

- Visit (tour) the Church to discover the meaning of the different areas and objects used at Mass such as the altar, tabernacle, crucifix, chalice, paten, vestments, baptismal font, stations of the cross, reconciliation room (confessional).
- Establish a prayerful environment in the classroom.
- Experience the four types of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, and petition.
- Pray the following:
 - Act of Contrition
 - Prayers and responses of the Mass.
- Experience spontaneous prayer.
- Understand the Mass as our greatest prayer.
- Understand these parts of the Mass: we listen to God's Word, offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father, and receive Jesus in communion.

- Understand a genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament as a prayer of reverence.
- Establish a special place in the classroom for the Bible and identify this book as God's Word.
- Practice a daily examination of conscience.
- Experience being reconciled to God, self, and others through the sacrament of penance.
- Appreciate the liturgical seasons of the Church year.

SERVICE

- Understand that we must include ALL people in our caring and good actions because God calls us to be responsible for others.
- Appreciate that we are sent forth to love and serve the Lord, using the gifts and talents God gave us.
- Understand that the friends and followers of Jesus act in loving ways and serve others in need.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Mark 12:41-44	... The Widow's Mite
Mark 6:31-44	... Multiplication of the Loaves
Mark 8:1-10	... Multiplication of the Loaves
John 17:1-26	... The Last Supper
Luke 22:7-20	... The Last Supper
Matthew 26:26-30	... The Last Supper
Mark 14:22-26	... The Last Supper
Luke 22:54-62	... Peter's Denial
Luke 24:13-35	... Emmaus Story
John 20:19-23	... Whose Sins You Forgive
Luke 15:11-24	... The Prodigal Son/Loving Father
Luke 17:11-17	... The Ten Lepers
Luke 15:1-7	... The Lost Sheep

Matthew 18:10 –14

... The Lost Sheep

Matthew 6:9-13

... The Lord's Prayer

John 10:11-15

... Good Shepherd

Luke 10:25-37

... Good Samaritan

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

absolution	communion	grace	pope
advent	confess	Holy Thursday	praise
all saints	confession	holy week	prayer
altar	conscience	Immaculate Conception	priest
baptism	consecrate	Jesus	psalm
baptismal font	contrition	last supper	reconciliation
Bible	creed	lectionary	reconciliation room
bishop	crucifix	lent	responsibility
Blessed Sacrament	Easter	Lord's day	resurrection
Blessed Trinity	examination of conscience	Mass	sacrament of Eucharist
blood of Christ	Eucharist	ordinary time	sacrament of penance
bread	fasting	parish	sacrifice
Catholic	forgiveness	paten	saint
chalice	genuflection	penance	sin
Christ	godparents	Pentecost	Son of God
Christian	Good Friday	petition	sorrow
Christmas			

stations of the cross

tabernacle

trinity

vestments

Stole

temptation

thanksgiving

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Responses to prayers at Mass

A Morning Prayer (optional)

Prayer before and after meals (optional)

SECOND GRADE (PENANCE)

The following information is taken from The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Notations cited are from the particular section in the guidelines titled Chapter IV: First Communion of Children. This information should be used to guide the catechetical components of preparation for the sacrament as well as shape the planning for parental catechesis.

MESSAGE

SIP 134 The doctrinal elements of catechesis for the sacrament of penance must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In preparing for their role, catechists are to rely especially on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Teaching of Christ, and other diocesan-approved catechetical materials. (Cf. NSC 7)

A. Catechesis concerning this sacrament should reflect the teaching of the Rite of Penance that this sacrament is rooted in baptismal grace and leads toward complete reconciliation in the Eucharist.

[The] victory (of Christ over sin) is first brought to light in baptism where our fallen nature is crucified with Christ so that the body of sin may be destroyed and we may no longer be slaves to sin, but rise with Christ and live for God. For this reason the Church proclaims its faith in "the one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."

"In the sacrifice of the Mass the passion of Christ is made present; his body is given for us and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins are offered to God again by the Church for the salvation of the world. In the Eucharist Christ is offered as 'the sacrifice which has made our peace' with God and in order that 'we may be brought together in unity' by his Holy Spirit."

"Furthermore, our Savior Jesus Christ, when he gave to his apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins, instituted in his Church the sacrament of penance. Thus the faithful who fall into sin after baptism may be reconciled with God and renewed in grace." (Rite of Penance, N. 2)

COMMUNITY

SIP 134 B. The term "penance" alludes to the process of personal repentance in the context of the community of faith, the discipline embraced by one who wants to be a "disciple" of the Lord (recalling the journey of the catechumenate). The term "reconciliation" alludes to the act whereby God, through the Church, overcomes our separation and sinful isolation in a gesture of merciful love.

WORSHIP

SIP 132 Before they come to eucharistic communion, candidates are to celebrate sacramental confession (CJC 914).

Liturgical Rites

"First Penance"

SIP 139.1 Whenever possible, the opportunity should be provided for those who celebrate the sacrament of penance for the first time to do so in the context of a communal celebration along with adults and other children.

.2 Those who plan such celebrations must familiarize themselves with Chapter II of the Rite of Penance, which is normative for these liturgical rites.

Such celebrations should be adapted for use with children, always maintaining the liturgical structure of the rite, emphasizing primary ritual acts, and avoiding practices that inflate secondary elements. (General principles from the Directory for Masses with Children, and the Lectionary for Masses with Children should be employed.)

In the context of a celebration prepared primarily for adults (as in parish lenten services), every effort must be made to welcome and accommodate children who are celebrating the sacrament of penance for the first time.

SIP 140 Planning for the rite, selection of readings, and preaching should reflect the teaching of the Rite of Penance (see No. 134, A, regarding the spirit of the celebration).

SIP 134 C. Regarding the "Prayer of the Penitent," (formerly called the "act of contrition")

The goal of formation is that children develop proper understanding and motivation in order to offer the prayer honestly. Like other penitents, children always have the freedom to speak this prayer in their own words. Models of traditional prayers may be presented even for memorization. (Rite of Penance no. 19. See also nos. 85-92 for examples.)

SECOND GRADE (PENANCE)

Theme:

In the sacrament to penance we celebrate God's love and forgiveness. Our sins are forgiven and through the Holy Spirit we live as Jesus did.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall the sacrament of baptism.
- Recall the Blessed Trinity and name the three persons.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES, DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR SECOND GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE PRIOR TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ God gives us the freedom to make choices NCD #101; TTOC pp. 55, 60-61, 429; CCC #1730.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit helps us to make right choices GCD #63, NCD #126; TTOC p.142; CCC #1433.
- ❖ God will always forgive us when we make wrong choices, if we are sorry NCD #125, 126, TTOC pp. 424, 425; CCC #1431, 1432.
- ❖ Sin is a break in our relationship with God TTOC p. 262; CCC #1440, 1459.
- ❖ God wants us to forgive others NCD #125, 126; TTOC p. 20; CCC #1458.
- ❖ God forgives us in many ways NCD #124; TTOC p.266, 422, 425, 426; CCC #1434-1438.
- ❖ We can say we are sorry to God with an Act of Contrition NCD #1124; TTOC pp.425-426; CCC #1451.

- ❖ The sacrament of penance is the ordinary means of sacramental forgiveness NCD #124; TTOC p.425; CCC #1424, 1484.

- ❖ There are other times we ask for forgiveness such as in the Penitential Rite in the Mass CCC #1434.

- ❖ Jesus gave us the gift of forgiveness of sins when he appeared to the Apostles after the resurrection (John 20: 19-23) NCD #124; TTOC p. 421; CCC #1441, 1444.

- ❖ The sacrament of penance is a sacrament of healing and a sign of God's mercy and love TTOC pp. 421, 422; CCC #1421, 1428.

- ❖ The sacrament of penance celebrates our conversion and God's love and forgiveness NCD #124; TTOC p.425; CCC #1423, 1428.

- ❖ The sacrament of penance welcomes us back to close friendship with God and the community NCD #99, 124; TTOC pp. 421, 422, 425; CCC #1422, 1424, 1440, 1443, 1462, 1468, 1469.

- ❖ Reconciliation frees us from sin and gives us grace, God's own life TTOC pp. 323, 422; CCC #1468, 1496.

- ❖ Reconciliation is necessary for the forgiveness of mortal sin and helpful for the forgiveness of venial sin and the strengthening of virtue NCD #124, 125; TTOC pp. 428-429; CCC #1446, 1447, 1456-1458, 1493.

- ❖ The priest is our friend TTOC pp.386-387, 389; CCC #1465.

- ❖ Jesus gave the priest the authority to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance NCD #124; TTOC pp. 423, 424; CCC #1441, 1442, 1444, 1461.
- ❖ Regular confession is a way to grow in faith NCD #124, 126; TTOC pp.427, 428-429; CCC #1458.
- ❖ We examine our conscience to prepare for penance NCD #124, 125; TTOC pp.424, 425-426; CCC #1454.
- ❖ The ten commandments are good guides for an examination of conscience NCD #105, 126; TTOC pp.426-427; CCC #1962.
- ❖ Penance is a way to make up for our sins NCD #124; TTOC p. 427; CCC #1459, 1494.
- ❖ The steps in the Rite of Reconciliation are: NCD #124; TTOC pp.432, 433; CCC #1480, 1491
 - confessing our sins TTOC p.426; CCC #1448
 - accepting a penance TTOC p.427; CCC #1448
 - praying an Act of Contrition TTOC p.425-426; CCC #1451
 - receiving absolution TTOC p.424; CCC #1449
 - practice of penance TTOC p.427; CCC #1494.

**RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:
COMMUNITY**

Students:

- Realize that we can be selfish and how that selfishness affects other people.

- Value the role of parents and teachers in making right choices.
- Understand that there are many wrong choices shown on television and in the media and sometimes through our friends.
- Understand that family and friends can also help us to make right choices.
- Realize that as we grow, we learn to be more responsible.
- Understand that God's grace changes us.
- Understand that we cannot love God without loving the people around us.

WORSHIP

- Understand how to examine our conscience.
- Experience the sacrament of penance.
- Understand the individual and communal Rites of Reconciliation.
- Visit the reconciliation room/confessional to become familiar with it and discover the meaning of the objects and furniture in it.

SERVICE

- Understand that the friends and followers of Jesus act in loving ways.
- Participate in activities that show a good example to others.
- Participate in activities to serve others as a way to show love for God and forgiveness and love for others.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Lk. 22:54-61	Peter's Denial
Jn. 20:19-23	Whose Sins You Forgive
Lk. 15:11-24	The Prodigal Son/Loving Father
Lk. 17:11-17	The Ten Lepers
Lk. 15:1-7	The Lost Sheep
Mt. 18:10-14	The Lost Sheep
Jn. 10:11-15	Good Shepherd
Lk. 10:25-37	Good Samaritan
Lk. 19:1-10	The Story of Zacchaeus
Mt. 13:30	Image of Wheat and Weeds
Psalm 145	Psalm of praise to God's majesty and loving providence
Mt. 9:1-8	Cure of the Paralytic
Mk. 2:1-12	Cure of the Paralytic
John 20:19-23	Jesus gives the gift of forgiveness of sins

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

absolution	Christ	contrition	faith
baptism	Christian	creed	fasting
bible	confess	crucifix	forgiveness
Blessed Trinity	confession	examination of conscience	Good Friday
Catholic	conscience		grace

holy week	praise	rite of reconciliation	sorrow
Jesus	prayer	responsibility	stations of the cross
lent	psalm	sacrament of penance	stole
mortal sin	reconciliation	sin	temptation
penance	reconciliation room	Son of God	venial sin
petition			virtue

PRAYERS

- Sign of the Cross
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- An Act of Contrition

SECOND GRADE (EUCHARIST)

The following information is taken from The Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Notations cited are from the particular section in the guidelines titled Chapter IV; First Communion of Children. This information should be used to guide the catechetical components of preparation for the first celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist as well as shape the planning for parental catechesis in this regard.

MESSAGE

SIP 135 The doctrinal elements of catechesis for First Holy Communion must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In preparing for their role, catechists are to rely especially on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Teaching of Christ, and other diocesan-approved catechetical materials. (Cf.NSC 7).

- A. Catechesis is to reflect the goal of eucharistic communion as stated in No. 126.
- B. In teaching, discussion, and publications regarding First Holy Communion, it must always be clear that the candidates are, by baptism, already members of the Body of Christ and living in communion with the Lord. They are to be welcomed into full eucharistic sharing, participating for the first time in the holy meal of the Lord's Body and Blood.

This will not be their first time to "meet Jesus" but rather it opens up to them a new, tangible, and wonderful way to encounter him truly present under the form of food and drink.

SIP 122 To be admitted to First Communion, children "must have sufficient knowledge...to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity," so they "can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion" (CJC 913.1).

SIP 124.1 Children with physical or learning disabilities and those who are behaviorally disturbed are to be presented for eucharistic communion along with their age peers, seeking a degree of understanding appropriate to their individual condition.

SIP 124.2 Children who are mentally retarded are to be admitted to the eucharist when they express a desire for the sacrament and in some way manifest their reverence for it. In cases of profound retardation, the eucharist may be shared without further requirements, as long as the child is able to consume the sacred elements.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE: COMMUNITY

SIP 115 Parish communities should welcome children being lead to First Communion and offer liturgical participation in accord with the Directory for Masses With Children and the Lectionary for Masses with Children.

SIP 116.1 It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents to lead their children to eucharistic communion with appropriate preparation (CJC 914).

SIP 116.2 Parents should bring their children regularly to celebration of Sunday Mass in order to introduce them to the eucharistic celebration.

This is so for two reasons:

- A. First Communion indicates that children are being integrated into the Church's eucharistic life. They must, therefore become familiar with this life in a concrete way.
- B. The liturgical Year "unfolds the entire mystery of Christ" and "completes the formation of the faithful" (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, no. 1). Understanding the "mystery of Christ" is required for admission to Holy Communion (CJC 913); celebration of the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year is a primary means for gaining such understanding.

SIP 117 Catechists assist both the progress of the candidates and the growth of the community. (RCIA 16) They should take care that their teaching is:

- A. filled with the spirit of the Gospel;
- B. adapted to the signs and cycles of the liturgical year;
- C. suited to the needs of the candidates;
- D. thoroughly grounded in Catholic doctrine (See Nos. 134-135).

SIP 126 Candidates for First Communion are to be led to "full, conscious, and active participation" in the Liturgy of the Eucharist according to the principles of the Directory for Masses With Children. Such participation is their "right and duty by virtue of their baptism" (See Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 14).

WORSHIP

SIP 144 In the liturgy of First Communion, the following must be considered:

- .1 The placement of the candidates in the assembly should reflect both their integration into families and the local community as well as their special presence as candidates for admission to the Eucharist. This will admit of a number of practical arrangements in local circumstances.

- .2 Where possible, baptismal sponsors of the candidates should be invited to take part in this celebration.
- .3 In the selection of music and texts, the principles of normal, good liturgical planning should be employed and reference made to the Directory for Masses With Children and the Lectionary for Masses with Children. Preference should be given to music from the normal repertory of the parish community rather than to acclamations and songs that will not be part of regular eucharistic celebration of the children.
- .4 The special focus of the candidates should be on their participation in the action of the eucharist (see No. 126). The candidates should be well prepared to sing the acclamations of the Eucharist Prayer, join in the Lord's Prayer, share the sign of peace, and partake in Holy Communion. Some of them should be involved in the presentation of the gifts (Only the bread and wine for the eucharist - and possibly an offering for the poor-are presented at this time). Other liturgical roles (e.g., greeter, reader, cantor) are better given to other competent young people and adults.
- .5 "Before saying 'This is the Lamb of God,' the celebrant may briefly remind the ...children of the preeminence of the eucharist, which is the climax of their initiation and the center of the whole Christian life" (RCIA 329).
- .6 Since the communion rite to which they are admitted includes the possibility of sharing in both the eucharistic bread and cup, children should be fully prepared for communion under both forms (including the chance to taste both elements in their unconsecrated form as part of their catechesis). In the Mass of First Communion, they should be able to exercise the options allowed to all communicants: reception of the host in the hand or on the tongue, and the chance to share in the cup of the Lord's blood.
- .7 Patterns of the communion procession that include family members escorting the candidates to communion should never be arranged in a way that might embarrass non-communicants.
- .8 Though normal decorum should prevail, no special clothing may be required of candidates for First Communion.

SERVICE

SIP 137 After the celebration of First Communion the children are to continue their journey of faith in a type of mystagogical formation.

- A. In the period immediately following First Communion, an opportunity should be given for the children and their families to reflect on and enjoy the new experience of sacramental life.
- B. Continued opportunities should be given for the children to experience the joyful welcome of closer ties with the community of the faithful (RCIA 246).
- C. Continuing catechesis should help the new communicants to deepen their grasp of the paschal mystery through reflection on the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the eucharist, and, of course, through regular sharing in the eucharist and increasing involvement in the works of charity (RCIA 244).
- D. Catechesis should also continue to help the children to develop their Christian conscience, achieve increasing comfort in celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, and pursue a life of discipleship devoted to reconciliation and peacemaking.

SECOND GRADE - IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION

Theme:

We come to the table of the Eucharist where we eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus. We learn how to live through the Word of God. We learn how to let the Sacrament which nourishes us nourish others and, through us, give life to the world.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall the sacrament of baptism as one of the sacraments of initiation.
- Recall the Blessed Trinity and name the three persons.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR SECOND GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE PRIOR TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ We bless food in our families TTOC pp. 365-366; CCC #1669, 1671.

- ❖ Jesus blessed food before He gave it to people CCC #1334-5.

- ❖ At the last supper, Jesus changed bread and wine into His body and blood TTOC pp. 353, 371-372; CCC #1323.

- ❖ We call the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus the Eucharist GCD #58, TTOC p. 368; CCC #1328.

- ❖ The Mass is the most important prayer of the Catholic Church NCD #120, 121; TTOC pp. 352-353, 360, 368; CCC #1324.

- ❖ In celebrating the Mass, Jesus shows his care about the entire people of God TTOC p. 375; CCC #1368.

- ❖ The Eucharist is our celebration of unity, reconciliation, and peace NCD #120, TTOC pp. 375, 380; CCC #1325-6, 1393.

- ❖ In the Liturgy of the Word, we hear the Gospel stories about Jesus NCD #121, TTOC pp. 340, 399; CCC #1349.

- ❖ In the Scriptures, Jesus teaches us that he is the Bread of Life (John 6) TTOC p. 381; CCC #1338.
- ❖ In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we remember and give thanks for Jesus' death and resurrection GCD #58; NCD #120, TTOC pp. 372-373; CCC #1328-1337.
- ❖ At Mass, Jesus is present in the Word of God and the Eucharist NCD #120, 121; TTOC pp. 360, 382; CCC #1373.
- ❖ The bread and wine of the Eucharist are consecrated by the priest; through the power of the Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine truly become the body and blood of Jesus NCD #121, TTOC pp. 372, 376; CCC #1333, 1353, 1357, 1375.
- ❖ The priest repeats Jesus' words and actions in the Eucharistic prayer TTOC p. 374; CCC #1341.
- ❖ The Mass commemorates Jesus' sacrifice GCD #58, NCD #120, TTOC p. 372; CCC #1341.
- ❖ The Eucharist is both meal and sacrifice GCD #58, NCD #120, TTOC pp. 354, 372; CCC #1330, 1382.
- ❖ At Mass, we remember the last supper; we share the body and blood of Jesus in Holy Communion NCD #120, TTOC pp. 375-376; CCC #1323, 1329.
- ❖ Jesus gives Himself to us as food at every Mass GCD #58, NCD #120, TTOC p. 379; CCC #1392.

- ❖ We should receive Communion often and worthily NCD #121, TTOC p. 377; CCC #1384, 1385, 1387, 1388, 1389.

- ❖ Jesus is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament GCD #58, NCD #121, TTOC pp. 382, 384; CCC #1374, 1378.

- ❖ The parts of the Mass are: NCD #121; CCC #1346
 - the gathering in which we come together to pray as one family CCC #1348
 - the readings through which we listen to God's Word TTOC p. 353; CCC #1349
 - the presentation and preparation of the gifts in which we get ready to thank God and offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father TTOC p. 353; CCC #1350
 - the Eucharistic Prayer in which, at the consecration the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus GCD #58; TTOC p.372; CCC #1352-3
 - the reception of communion in which we receive Jesus TTOC pp. 354, 375; CCC #1331, 1355
 - the dismissal in which we are blessed to go out and help others NCD #120, TTOC p. 380; CCC #1332, 1397.

- ❖ Our Church celebrates advent, Christmas, lent, holy week, Easter and special holy days and honors Mary, the Mother of God and saints TTOC pp. 204, 208, 404-405; CCC #1163, 1171, 1172, 1173.

**RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:
COMMUNITY**

Students:

- Understand that it is important to participate in the Eucharistic liturgy with our family.

- Realize God wants us to welcome ALL people of whatever ability and culture to our faith community.
- Participate in the singing, responses, and listening with the parish community at Sunday liturgies each week.
- Participate in parish worship and social activities for liturgical seasons and feasts.

WORSHIP

- Pray the following prayers: The Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer of Sorrow, Prayer of the Faithful, Prayer after Communion, Prayers and responses of the Mass.
- Participate in gestures and postures for the various parts of the Liturgy.
- Understand the different ways to receive communion.
- Visit the church to discover the meaning of the different areas and objects used at Mass.
- Experience spontaneous prayer.
- Understand the Bible as God's Word.

SERVICE

- Understand the role of the laity, religious, and priests as one of service.
- Understand that God is present to us through every person and "thing" (creation).
- Become aware that God calls us to be responsible for others, especially people in need.
- Understand that we are sent forth to love and serve the Lord, using the gifts and talents God gave us.
- Become aware that we can nourish others by being kind and helping as Jesus did.
- As Jesus gives himself to us in Eucharist, we are called to serve others.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Mt. 14: 13-21	Multiplication of Loaves and Fish
Mt. 6:30-44	Multiplication of Loaves and Fish
Lk. 9:10-17	Multiplication of Loaves and Fish
Jn. 6:1-15	Multiplication of Loaves and Fish
Jn. 17:1-26	The Last Supper
Mt. 26:20-30	The Last Supper
Mk. 14:22-26	The Last Supper
Lk. 24:13-35	The Emmaus Story
Mt. 6:9-13	The Lord's Prayer
Jn. 21:1-14	Jesus at the Seashore
Acts 2:42-47	Community Sharing All Things in Common

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

advent	Christ	Good Friday
all saints	Christian	grace
altar	Christmas	Holy Thursday
baptism	ciborium	holy week
Bible	communion	host
Blessed Sacrament	consecrate	instituted
Blessed Trinity	creed	Jesus
blood of Christ	Easter	last supper
body of Christ	Eucharist	lent
bread	faith	Lord's day
Catholic	fasting	Mass
chalice	genuflection	ordinary time

parish

paten

Pentecost

petition

pope

praise

prayer

priest

psalm

resurrection

sacrament of Eucharist

sacrifice

saint

Son of God

stole

tabernacle

thanksgiving

trinity

vestments

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Responses of the Mass

THIRD GRADE

Theme: The Church is the people of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, sharing the faith of the apostles in Jesus Christ. The Church continues the work of Jesus today by sharing the Good News, celebrating the sacraments and serving all God's people.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall that we become members of God's family through baptism.
- Recall that sin breaks our relationship with God and that we can be forgiven by God's grace in the sacrament of penance.
- Recall the four forms of prayer: praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, and petition.
- Recall the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Grace before and after meals (optional)

Act of Contrition

Prayers and responses at Mass

- Review the sacraments of Eucharist and penance.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR THIRD GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS.

MESSAGE

- ❖ Jesus tells us about God's kingdom through his words and actions NCD #53; TTOC pp. 160-161; CCC #547-550.

- ❖ Jesus invited His followers to become part of the kingdom of God NCD #53; TTOC pp. 161-162; CCC #551.
- ❖ Jesus called the apostles to be servants among his people NCD #154; TTOC pp. 170-171; CCC #859, 876, 1506.
- ❖ Jesus chose Peter as the leader of the apostles NCD #72; TTOC pp. 169-170; CCC #552-553.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit gathered the apostles at Pentecost NCD #92; TTOC pp. 415-416; CCC #726.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit draws Jesus' followers together as one Christian community NCD#70; TTOC pp. 144-145; CCC #813.
- ❖ The Church is the family of God NCD #68; TTOC p. 157, 159; CCC #804, 859, 959, 2233.
- ❖ Jesus is still present in the Church especially through the Eucharist and other sacraments NCD #97; TTOC pp. 359-360; CCC #737, 739, 1076, 1373.
- ❖ Bishops, as successors to the apostles, are the leaders of Jesus' people today NCD #93; TTOC pp. 392-393; CCC #857, 861-862, 877, 880, 886, 888, 893-894.
- ❖ The Pope as successor of St. Peter, the first apostle, is the head of the whole Church NCD #69, 93; TTOC pp. 172-173; CCC #862, 881, 882.
- ❖ The Pope and bishops guard the teaching of Christ and help us to understand what we are to believe GCD #13; NCD #104; TTOC pp. 185-187; CCC #862, 888-892.

- ❖ We are called to believe what the Church teaches GCD #63; NCD #104; TTOC p. 243; CCC #1785.
- ❖ We are united in sharing the Eucharist, our beliefs, praying together, and sharing with others (The Church is One) NCD #72 a; TTOC p.166; CCC #787, 788, 789, 790, 866.
- ❖ We listen to God and do what God wants by living in the way Jesus did, loving God, and caring about others (The Church is Holy) NCD #72 b; TTOC p. 166; CCC #825, 826.
- ❖ We welcome ALL people in the whole world; God came to save all people (The Church is Catholic) NCD #72 c; TTOC pp. 166-167; CCC #831, 835, 868.
- ❖ We obey and love the teachings of the apostles and try to live these teachings today (The Church is Apostolic) NCD #72 d; TTOC p.167; CCC #857, 869.
- ❖ The ten commandments and the two great commandments show us how to love God and others NCD #105; TTOC pp. 247-248; CCC #2052, 2054, 2055, 2062, 2067.
- ❖ The Apostles Creed summarizes our basic beliefs as followers of Jesus NCD #45; TTOC p.510; CCC #167, p. 49 & 50, #187, 194, Part One, Section Two, Ch. 1-3.
- ❖ We belong to the Catholic Church, the living body of Jesus Christ today NCD#68, 93; TTOC pp. 156 & 159; CCC #830, 833, 834.
- ❖ We honor Mary as the Mother of God and our mother; we see her as a special model of faith NCD #106; TTOC pp. 202, 206; CCC #967.
- ❖ Stories of saints are examples of people who have responded well to God's grace NCD #107; TTOC pp. 203-204; CCC #828, 957.

- ❖ The saints are examples of faith for us to imitate NCD #107; CCC #828.
- ❖ We ask God to show us how to use our talents and abilities best in a vocation as a sister, brother, priest, deacon, married or single person GCD #66; NCD #94; TTOC pp.313 & 316; CCC #873.
- ❖ Death is the beginning of living with God forever in heaven for those who are faithful NCD #108; TTOC pp. 467, 468; CCC #1020.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Value that as we grow, we learn to be more responsible both for our own good and the good of others.
- Appreciate that belonging to the Church involves participating in the faith community and contributing to it by our gifts.
- Participate in celebrations that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as the feast of the patron saint of the parish, special devotions.
- Accept responsibility for telling others about Jesus, and building up the family of God through works of love, justice, and peace.
- Become familiar with the names and roles of some church leaders on the universal, diocesan, and parish levels.
- Understand the role of the Church in helping us to live as Jesus asks us to live.
- Value the adults in our lives who model a life of faith (e.g. parents, teachers, priests).

WORSHIP

- Participate with the Church community of God as we gather each Sunday to celebrate the Good News that Jesus has died, is risen, and will return again.
- Appreciate the various kinds of prayer, for example, praise, thanks, sorrow, and petition.
- Grow in understanding of the Apostles Creed.
- Pray to Mary, our special mother.

- Experience the rosary as a means of prayer.
- Participate in formal, reflective, and spontaneous prayer.
- Experience opportunities to participate in celebrations of the sacraments of Eucharist and penance.
- Deepen our awareness of the four Gospels as Jesus' story.
- Experience celebrations appropriate to the liturgical seasons.

SERVICE

- Appreciate that God calls a person to one of various vocations – married life, religious life, priesthood, or single life.
- Grow in awareness of the needs of others.
- Appreciate that we must share our time and talents in ways that show our love for God and others.
- Accept that we are responsible for the choices we make.
- Become familiar with a Church agency that serves the needs of the community.
- Participate in acts of service for neighbors, friends, family.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47	... Beginning of the Christian Community
Acts of the Apostles 2:1-41	... Descent of the Holy Spirit
Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40	... Philip and the Ethiopian
John 21:15-17	... Peter the Shepherd
Luke 24:13-35	... Emmaus Story
John 6	... Jesus, Source of Life
Luke 13:10-13	... Cure of Woman with a Hemorrhage
Mark 1:40-45	... Cure of a Leper
Mark 7:31-37	... Cure of a Deaf Man
Matthew 13:1-53	... Parables of the Kingdom

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

adoration	Easter	ministry	Savior
advent	Eucharist	mission	scripture
apostles	faithful	parish	sin
apostles creed	gospel	pastor	Son of God
apostolic	holy	Pentecost	tabernacle
bishop	kingdom of God	people of God	ten commandments
Catholic	lent	Peter	trinity
chalice	initiation	pope (holy father)	vocation
church	liturgy of the	reconciliation	Word of God
commandment	Eucharist	rosary	worship
communion of saints	liturgy of the Word	sacraments	
diocese	minister	sacrifice	
		saints	

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

Grace before and after meals (optional)

FOURTH GRADE

Theme: Everyone has a call to holiness in imitation of Jesus. We respond to this call by living as members of the community of the Church, by understanding and obeying the ten commandments, by following the great commandment of love of God and neighbor as well as the beatitudes and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The Holy Spirit enlightens us and gives us the power to live as Jesus did.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall initiation sacraments.
- Recall that the Church is the family of God which includes ALL people.
- Review that Jesus continues to be with us through the sacraments.
- Recall that Jesus chose the apostles as the first leaders, to be of service among his people.
- Review that Jesus appointed Peter as the leader of the apostles.
- Recall that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
- Review that the Holy Spirit came to the apostles at Pentecost.
- Recite the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Prayers before and after meals (optional)

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

- Review an examination of conscience.
- Review and describe the steps included in the individual celebration of the sacrament of penance and the reasons for each.

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR FOURTH GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ The kingdom of God is the presence of God's love, peace, and justice in the world NCD #67, 100; TTOC pp. 160-162, 471-472; CCC #541-550, 2046.
- ❖ The ten commandments are part of the covenant or promise between God and His people in the Old Testament NCD #52; TTOC p.247; CCC #2056-2063.
- ❖ The ten commandments guide our actions in daily life NCD #105, Appendix A TTOC pp. 247-248; CCC #2069, 2072, Part Three, Section Two, Ch. 1-2.
- ❖ Jesus' new law of love tells us we must love God above all things and love others of diverse races, ages, cultures, and abilities NCD #154; TTOC pp. 248-249, 273-274, 305-307; CCC #1931-1933, 1934-1938, 2052, 2055.
- ❖ The spiritual and corporal works of mercy teach us to care about the needs of ALL people and to have a special love for the poor and persons who are disadvantaged NCD #66; TTOC p.434; CCC #2447.
- ❖ The eight beatitudes are teachings of Jesus that show us how we can be truly happy and share happiness with others NCD #100; TTOC pp. 18, 328; CCC #1716-1719.
- ❖ The precepts of the Church are seven Church laws that guide our practice of holy days and fast days, receiving sacraments, studying Church teaching, and helping in missionary work NCD #105, Appendix B; TTOC pp. 195-196; CCC #2041-2043.

- ❖ Jesus calls each of us to personal conversion through a process of sorrow, forgiveness, and reconciliation NCD #124; TTOC pp. 424-427; CCC #1426, 1427-1428, 1430-1432.
- ❖ The Church, as a community of forgiveness, celebrates different forms of reconciliation through its prayer and liturgy NCD #124; TTOC pp. 430-431, 432; CCC #1434-1439, 1443-1444, 1480-1484.
- ❖ Sin and evil exist in our world today as a result of original sin and its consequences NCD #98; TTOC p.324; CCC #385-387, 396-410, 1739, 1849-1850.
- ❖ Mortal sin is a total break in our relationship with God and the Church NCD #98;TTOC pp. 262-264; CCC #1855-1859, 1861.
- ❖ Venial sin is a less serious offense but one which weakens our relationship with self, God, and others NCD #98; TTOC pp. 265-266; CCC #1855, 1862-1863.
- ❖ There is a difference between situations of accident or carelessness and deliberate moral choice, direct or indirect NCD #98; TTOC p.262; CCC #387, 1860.
- ❖ The sacrament of penance is an important sacramental way to express sorrow and experience God's forgiveness; we need to go to confession regularly NCD #124; TTOC pp. 426-427.
- ❖ God wants us to care for our bodies and respect the bodies of others NCD #105 b,c; TTOC pp. 272-274; CCC #2258, 2288-2291, 2300, 2519, 2521-2522.
- ❖ Division, people not getting along, is against the will of Christ NCD #95; TTOC pp. 213, 293-294; CCC #817-822, 1868-1869, 1938.

- ❖ Mary is an excellent model of how to be a faithful follower of Jesus; she is the model disciple in Christ's Church NCD #106; TTOC p.202; CCC #967.
- ❖ Individual gifts and talents lead us to be disciples as priests, sisters and brothers, married or single people GCD #66; NCD #94; TTOC pp.312-313, 316, 317, 395, 452; CC #873.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Express an understanding of the relationship between God, self, and others.
- Understand that God calls us to a life of community within the Church.
- Participate in celebrations that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as the anniversary of the dedication of the parish church, special devotions.
- Understand that belonging to the Church means following Jesus' way of living responsibly for self and others.
- Appreciate the Church as a universal community which includes persons of ALL ages, races, cultures, and abilities.
- Explore ways in which each of the ten commandments applies to our lives and our relationships with others.
- Understand that the beatitudes should guide our relationships with each other and lead us to God.
- Grow in understanding of the ways in which friends, society, media can lead to occasions of sin as well as occasions of grace.
- Appreciate the need to respect people of all religions.
- Become aware of how Jesus' call to forgiveness of others can be used in real situations of hurt in our daily lives.

WORSHIP

- Understand why it is important to participate in the weekly Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.
- Develop ways and occasions to celebrate communal prayer, both formal and spontaneous, especially those that celebrate liturgical seasons.
- Participate in class prayer services.
- Develop a sensitivity for practicing a daily personal examination of conscience.
- Understand that the sacrament of penance celebrates the forgiveness of Christin and through the

Church.

- Help plan and join in a communal celebration of the sacrament of penance.

SERVICE

- Develop an understanding that individual gifts and talents are to be used in the service of others.
- Appreciate that the Church, as a community, is called to serve others through forgiveness as well as by concrete care for the world and those in need.
- Develop and participate in simple class projects to benefit persons in the parish and/or local community in need of special assistance.
- Participate in making good moral choices to serve others.
- Develop ways to show our special love for the poor.
- Participate in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Genesis 2:4 - 3:24	... The Fall
Luke 10:25-28	... Jesus' Great Commandment
Luke 12:27-34	... Lilies of the Field
John 4:21-24	... Worship
John 15:21	... Reaction of the World
John 13:34-35	... Love One Another
John 7:1-10; 11-17	... Jesus living of the life of love
John 14:1-6	... The Way, Truth, and Life
Matthew 5:1-12	... The Beatitudes
Matthew 25	... The Works of Mercy and Last Judgment
Luke 15:11-32	... Prodigal Son and Loving Father
John 20:19-23	... The gift of Penance

John 20:1-10;11-18

... The empty tomb and appearance to Mary Magdalen

Luke 23:39-43

... The "good thief" on the cross

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

absolution	covet	in vain	reconciliation
ascension	contrition	justice	redemption
assumption	disciple	kingdom of God	rosary
baptism	Eucharist (Mass)	law of love	service
beatitudes	examination of conscience	liturgy	sorrow
Christian	faith	mortal sin	spiritual works of mercy
commandments	free-will	obedience	ten commandments
communion of saints	grace	occasion of sin	temptation
community	holy day of obligation	original sin	venial sin
confirmation	hope	parable	universal Church
conscience	Immaculate Conception	penance	virtue
corporal works of mercy	incarnation	precepts of the church	violence
covenant		prophets	

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

The Rosary

Prayers before and after meals (optional)

FIFTH GRADE

Theme: God gave us the ultimate sacrament in Jesus. Jesus instituted the seven sacraments to give us grace. The sacraments are actions of Christ celebrated in the Church. In the experience of the seven sacraments we share the life and person of Jesus in a special and unique way. In the midst of the faith community, Jesus is present to us through the words and symbols.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Recall that we are all called to live holy lives and imitate Jesus in our actions and choices.
- Recall that we become fully initiated members of the Church through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.
- Review the ten commandments, two great commandments, beatitudes, spiritual and corporal works of mercy as guides to daily life.
- Recall that the Holy Spirit guides us to make good choices and live as Jesus did.
- Review the individual and communal forms of celebration of the sacrament of penance.
- Review an examination of conscience.
- Recite the following prayers:
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Glory Be
 - Prayers before and after meals (optional)
 - Act of Contrition
 - Apostles Creed

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR FIFTH GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ Jesus, the Sacrament of God, is the visible sign of God's love for all people NCD #100, 114; TTOC p.362; CCC #1076, 1115.
- ❖ The Church is the Sacrament of Christ in the world NCD #63, 114; TTOC p.362; CCC #738, 1118.
- ❖ Signs and symbols and their meanings are important in every aspect of our daily lives NCD #55; TTOC p.363; CCC #1146-1148.
- ❖ Through sacramental signs and symbols we are able to experience the presence of God through the power of the Holy Spirit NCD #54, 114; TTOC p.363; CCC #1084, 1097, 1111, 1120, 1145, 1152, 1153, 1155.
- ❖ The sacraments, through both word and symbol, bring God into our lives and bring us into God's life NCD #97; TTOC p.363; CCC #1084, 1088-1089, 1091-1092, 1122-1123.
- ❖ Grace is God's life in us NCD #98; TTOC p.323; CCC #1996, 1997.

(This would be an appropriate place to introduce the CVOL lessons for Grade 5).

- ❖ Baptism, the initial encounter with the sacramental Christ is: NCD #116; TTOC p.401; CCC #1213-1284
 - a dying of self to sin TTOC p.407; CCC #1216, 1250, 1262, 1263
 - a sharing in the risen life of Christ TTOC pp.408-409; CCC #1214, 1227
 - a joining to the community of Christ's Church TTOC p.411; 1248, 1253, 1267-1270.
- ❖ Confirmation is: NCD #118; CCC #1285-1321
 - a completion of initiation TTOC p.416; CCC #1285
 - a call to each Catholic to grow in faith and witness TTOC pp.416, 417-419; CCC #1285, 1303
 - an empowerment through the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit TTOC p.416; CCC #1303, 1829-1831.

- Eucharist, the center of sacramental life, is: NCD #121, 132; TTOC p.368; CCC #1324, 1322-1419
- consecrated by an ordained minister, the priest TTOC pp.374, 392-393; CCC #1142
- the real presence of Jesus TTOC pp.381-382; CCC #1374
- a nourishing, strengthening, and unifying source for the People of God TTOC pp.368, 379-380; CCC #1097, 1123.

- ❖ Penance is: NCD #124; CCC #1422-1498
- a celebration of God's forgiveness TTOC p.421; CCC #1424, 1441-1442
- an absolution of our sins TTOC pp.432-433; CCC #1424, 1449
- a reunion between us and God and the Church TTOC pp.421, 433; CCC #1424, 1440, 1443-1445, 1462.

- ❖ Anointing of the Sick is: NCD #127; CCC #1499-1532
- an extension of the healing of Christ to the seriously ill or elderly TTOC pp.436-437; CCC #1499, 1514
- a taking away of sin through the grace of the Holy Spirit TTOC p.439; CCC # 1503, 1520
- a relief and strengthening for the soul of the sick person TTOC p.439; CCC #1503, 1508, 1520, 1521
- sometimes a restoration of bodily health TTOC p.439, CCC #1512, 1515, 1520.

- ❖ Matrimony is: NCD #130; CCC #1601-1666
- a celebration of life-long love and commitment between a man and a woman TTOC pp.448-449; CCC #1601, 1604, 1643, 1660
- a reflection of the covenant of indissoluble love between Christ and the Church TTOC pp.443-444; CCC #1605, 1639-1640, 1644, 1661
- an empowerment for the couple to be love-giving and life-giving TTOC pp.445-448; CCC #1641, 1642.

(This could be another place to incorporate the CVOL lessons for Grade 5).

- ❖ Holy Orders is: NCD #132; CCC #1536-1600
- a permanent sign of Christ's presence through the priest TTOC pp.386-387, 387-389; CCC #1582, 1583
- a primary means of the sacramental presence of Christ TTOC p.389; CCC #1548-1551
- a celebration of the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon TTOC p.392; CCC #1554, 1555-1571.
- ❖ The vocation we freely choose to the married, vowed religious, priestly or single life is our response to our baptismal call GCD #66; NCD #94, 133, 180; TTOC pp. 312 & 313, 317-322, 395-399, 444-445; CCC #873, 897 & 898, 915 & 916, 1577, 1603 & 1604.
- ❖ The Liturgy is the public worship of the Church TTOC p.359; CCC #1069, 1140.
- ❖ Every Catholic is responsible for building up the body of Christ within the parish family NCD #118; TTOC pp.376-377; CCC #1070, 1071, 1091, 1098, 1140.
- ❖ Sacramentals are a blessing, an action or an object that remind us of Christ's presence and love, e.g. holy water, oil, incense, blessed palm, medals, statues NCD #147; TTOC pp.365-366; CCC #1667, 1670, 1671-1673.
- ❖ At death, each individual will be personally accountable before God for the choices one has made during one's life NCD #109; TTOC pp.460-461; CCC #1021, 1022.
- ❖ At the end of time, when Christ returns, all of humanity will be accountable for their participation in building the kingdom of God NCD #110; TTOC pp. 472-473; CCC #1021, 1038, 1039.
- ❖ Heaven means living in complete union with God forever NCD #109; TTOC p.468; CCC: #1023, 1025-1029.
- ❖ Hell means being separated from God forever NCD #109; TTOC p.466; CCC #1033, 1035-1037.
- ❖ Purgatory means the continuing journey after death of moving toward complete union with God forever NCD #109; TTOC p.463; CCC #1030, 1031.
- ❖ All religions that recognize the mystery of God's presence are deserving of respect NCD #95;

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Appreciate that ALL persons are created in God's image.
- Understand that all of creation reflects God's existence.
- Value persons of every race and ability and understand they are of inestimable value from the unborn to the elderly and terminally ill.
- Grow in the understanding that the Holy Spirit gives us special gifts and talents for the good of the community.
- Reflect upon God's gift of free will and our responsibility for our own actions.
- Grow in the understanding that sin is freely choosing to do what we know to be wrong or omitting to do what we know is good.
- Reflect upon personal failings and sin in relationship to Jesus' law of love, the ten commandments, and the precepts of the Church.
- Understand the call from God to exercise our freedom wisely by living moral lives.
- Develop a simple method for conscience formation and moral decision making.
- Become aware of the affects of sin that separate us from God and community.
- Identify ways we can build up the parish family.
- Participate in celebrations that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as customs for saints days, special blessings for holidays and holydays.

WORSHIP

- Appreciate the cycle of liturgical seasons, major feasts days, and holy days of obligation throughout the Church year.
- Establish a prayerful environment in the classroom.
- Participate in a class level Liturgy of the Eucharist.

- Prepare and celebrate a class level rite of the sacrament of penance.
- Participate in prayer services celebrating: God's welcoming us into the Christian community, God's healing and forgiving presence, and God's unending love.

SERVICE

- Value all forms of life as a sacred gift.
- Appreciate that all followers of Jesus are called to the ministry of service through baptism.
- Understand that Jesus heals others through us.
- Appreciate that the love of Jesus continues through us to the world in the Spirit of God.
- Understand that all members of families have the right to be treated with love, respect, and dignity.
- Grow in the awareness of the continuous need for peace and justice in the world, with some understanding of world hunger, world peace, human rights, sacredness of life, and the need to care for the environment as God's creation.
- Be open to the possibility of God's invitation to the priesthood or religious life.
- Practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
- Appreciate the beatitudes as Jesus' invitation to perfection.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Mark 1:9-11	... Baptism of Jesus
John 3:1-21	... Nicodemus
Acts 2:1-4	... Pentecost
Acts 8:15-17	... Laying on of Hands
Galatians 5:22-23	... Fruits of the Holy Spirit
Isaiah 11:2-3	... Gifts of the Spirit
Mark 14:22-26	... Last Supper
Luke 24:14-20	... Last Supper

Luke 24:13-35	... Emmaus Story
Luke 15:11-32	... Forgiving Father
John 4:5-26	... Woman at the Well
Luke 10:30-37	... Good Samaritan
John 2:1-11	... Wedding at Cana
Matthew 19:6	... God has joined together
Ephesians 5:25-33	... Love Each Other
Mark 3:13-19	... Commissioning of the Apostles
Matthew 4:18-22	... Call of the Apostles
Mark 6:12-13	... Anointing with Oil
James 5:14-15	... If anyone is ill

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

absolution	celibate	Eucharist	judgment
advent	chrism	faith	justice
advocate	confirmation	fidelity	kingdom of God
anointing of the sick	consecrate	grace	laity
apostle	conscience	gifts of the spirit	lent
baptism	community	gospel	liturgical year
beatitude	compassionate	heaven	liturgy
Blessed Sacrament	creed	hell	liturgy of the Eucharist
Blessed Trinity	death	holy orders	liturgy of the Word
Catholic	disciple	incarnation	marriage
	easter vigil	initiation	

mortal sin	purgatory	sacraments of	viaticum
mystery	reconciliation	commitment	vocation
ordain	religious life	saint	Word of God
ordinary time	revelation	sanctifier	vow
original sin	sacrament	sign	worship
passover	sacramental	sin	
prayer	sacraments of	symbol	
priesthood	initiation	ten commandments	
	sacraments of healing	venial sin	

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Prayers before and after meals (optional)

SIXTH GRADE

Theme: God, our Creator, loves us deeply and interacts in our lives. The saving actions of God throughout history are most completely revealed in Jesus. God's loving relationship with the chosen people is recorded in the Old and New Testaments (Hebrew and Christian Scriptures) written by persons of faith under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Church is responsible for safeguarding and interpreting the truth we find in the Scriptures. All Christians continue the work of building the kingdom of God.

REVIEW PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Review the ten commandments and seven sacraments.
- Recall and explain special days and holy days such as All Soul's Day and the Immaculate Conception.
- Recall saints and martyrs and discuss examples of each.
- Recall the rosary, the mysteries and the Hail Holy Queen Prayer.
- Review the stations of the cross.
- Review symbols associated with Church seasons such as the Jesse tree for advent.
- Recite the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

Nicene Creed

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Memorare

Prayers before and after meals (optional)

GIVEN THE COGNITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE - AND THE COMMUNITY, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE COMPONENTS APPROPRIATE FOR SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

MESSAGE

- ❖ The Scriptures are the inspired Word of God NCD #60 TTOC p.485; CCC #105-107.
- ❖ Written Scripture developed from an oral tradition of the lived experience of God's presence DV #14, 15, 17; GDSCM p.12 Gen Doct. Content pt. 5; CT #11.
- ❖ There are different literary forms found in the Scriptures NCD #60; TTOC p.485; CCC #110.
- ❖ The Catholic Church in its Magisterum or teaching office of the bishops has final authority to interpret the truth we find in the Scriptures NCD #60; TTOC pp. 489-490; CCC #85, 100.
- ❖ The Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) tells the story of the relationship between God and the people of Israel NCD #60; TTOC pp. 210-211; CCC #62-64, 203, 204, 218.
- ❖ The major themes that are present throughout the Scriptures are Revelation TTOC p.29; CCC #50, 53 Covenant TTOC p.71; CCC #56-62 Redemption TTOC p.119; CCC #55, 122, 571, 601; Salvation NCD #60; TTOC p.35; CCC #124.
- ❖ The stories of Creation and the Fall help us to understand who we are and what God wants for us GCD #51; NCD #85; TTOC pp.61, 62, 66; CCC #349, 356-359, 396-398, 402.
- ❖ Stories of Abraham, Moses and other ancestors in faith give us examples of how to respond to God in faith NCD #43, 52; TTOC pp.71, 210, 211; CCC #59, 60, 72, 706, 2810.
- ❖ The Exodus event is the Israelites journey from slavery to freedom NCD #60; TTOC p.71; CCC #62, 2060-2061.

- ❖ The Scriptures contain stories of how God reveals Himself through the lives of men and women NCD #52; TTOC p.181; CCC #61, 64, 76, 142, 144.
 - ❖ Scripture helps us to understand who God created us to be and how we are to live NCD #60; TTOC p.53; CCC #282.
- (How we can know what God wants us to be is the topic of Class One for Grade 6 in the CVOL. This would be an appropriate place to introduce the CVOL lessons for Grade 6).**
- ❖ The Scriptures reveal that angels are spiritual beings who honor God at all times and sometimes act as God's messengers NCD #85, 154; TTOC p.51; CCC #328, 329, 332, 333.
 - ❖ Kings Saul, David, and Solomon help us to understand why the people of Jesus' time were waiting for "the anointed one" NCD #52; TTOC p.71; CCC #695.
 - ❖ God sent prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekial and others to call people back to a faithful way of living NCD #52; TTOC pp.71, 72, 210; CCC #64, 72, 218.
 - ❖ Through the unfolding of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) we come to know Jesus as one pre-figured and foretold; we understand him as a member of the Jewish community NCD #77; TTOC p.210; CCC #518, 531.
 - ❖ Christians understand Jesus as a prophet and messiah; He is the divine Son of God and truly human NCD #90; TTOC pp. 160-161, 178; CCC #436-440, 528-529, 535, 540.
 - ❖ The New Testament (Christian Scriptures) continue to unfold salvation history through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus NCD #60; TTOC pp. 370-373; CCC #124, 140.
 - ❖ The mission of Jesus is kept alive in the Catholic Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit NCD #54, 92; TTOC pp. 157-158; CCC #737, 738. **(This is an appropriate place to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lesson in the back of this binder.)**

- ❖ The Church is the People of God, composed of ALL those believers of every age, race, culture, sex, and ability who will accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior NCD #64; TTOC p. 159; CCC #781-782.
- ❖ We find the fullness of truth and life we have in the Catholic Church, the living Body of Jesus Christ NCD #95; TTOC pp. 175-176, 186-197, 217-219; CCC #824. **(This is an appropriate place to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lesson in the back of this binder.)**
- ❖ We recognize and respect that there are "elements of truth" in the beliefs of other people, e.g. other Christians, the Orthodox Churches, Judaism NCD #77, 78, 79, 95; TTOC. Ch.16; CCC #818, 819, 838, 839.
- ❖ Division among people is against the will of God; all must strive for the unity of the Church NCD #95; TTOC pp. 213, 293-294; CCC #817-819, 845. **(This is an appropriate place to use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lesson in the back of this binder.)**
- ❖ All believers need to work together for the coming of God's kingdom NCD #71; TTOC pp. 217-221; CCC #542, 543, 782.

RESPONSE/EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

- Develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Understand that everyone who is baptized has a responsibility to take an active part in the life and work of the Church.
- Grow in the awareness that all Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit to build up the community by caring about the poor, the suffering, and the needy.
- Understand that members of the parish are a family who support one another.
- Value the family as the primary community.
- Express ways to show respect for family life.
- Understand that reconciliation reunites us with God and the Christian community.
- Participate in celebrations that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as the anniversary of the dedication of the parish church, the feast of the patron saint of the parish.
- Appreciate our common heritage with the Jewish people.
- Appreciate that remarks or stories against people of different races, nationalities, and abilities are offensive.
- Experience opportunities for faith sharing/faith storytelling.

WORSHIP

- Value the Eucharistic Celebration(Mass) as the central act of worship for Catholics.
- Grow in the understanding that the Old and New Testaments (Hebrew and Christian Scriptures) are the source of our Eucharistic and sacramental liturgies and our personal prayer and meditation.
- Understand the Eucharist in relationship to passover, covenant, the last supper, crucifixion, and resurrection.
- Plan and participate in class/community liturgies and paraliturgies.
- Value the sign of the cross as a public sign of our Catholic witness.
- Participate in different prayer experiences: formal, spontaneous, quiet/silent prayer, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, contrition, and petition.
- Understand liturgical seasons as symbolic times to recall important events in the life of Christ.
- Experience some prayers and practices for specific liturgical seasons.
- Experience the use of symbolism, art, environment, and music as human expressions in the worship of God and value their importance in liturgy.
- Understand the importance of a frequent examination of conscience.
- Participate in the individual celebration of the sacrament of penance on a frequent basis.
- Participate in prayer for unity among all believers.
- Participate in prayer for the living and the dead.

SERVICE

- Value the women and men of Sacred Scripture as models of holiness and service.
- Explore what their example means for us today.
- Value that the mission of Christ, a life of holiness and service, is to be carried out by Christians in every community.
- Develop ways to use personal talents in the service of others.
- Appreciate that prayer is the source of a life of holiness and service and begin to respond to the call.

- Become involved in some human services the parish community offers.
- Understand service as ministry that goes beyond the parish community.
- Understand some forms of slavery in our world, e.g. racism, sexism, hopelessness, abortion, pornography, war, and the need to change things (NCD p.168).
- Value the relationship between justice and peace.

SCRIPTURE FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Genesis 2:4-25	... Creation
Genesis 4:3-11	... Cain & Abel
Genesis 9:12-13	... The Covenant with Noah
Genesis 12:1-17;21:1-6	... Abraham & Sarah
Deuteronomy 6:4-7	... The Shema
Genesis 37-50	... Joseph & his Brothers
Exodus 20:1-17	... The Ten Commandments
John 18:28-19:30	... Passion of Jesus
Matthew 5:1-12	... Beatitudes
Luke 9:28-36	... The Transfiguration
Luke 24:13-32	... Emmaus
Acts 1:1-11	... Jesus' Final Appearance
Matthew 28:16-19	... Jesus' Final Appearance
Matthew 25:14-30	... Use of Talents

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING TERMS

abortion	eucharistic liturgy	liturgical prayer	psalms
advent	exodus	manna	racism
chastity	Hebrew Scriptures	messiah	Redeemer
chosen people	heritage	ministry	redemption
Christian Scriptures	hopelessness	obligation	reform
communal prayer	injustice	paraliturgy	revelation
covenant	inspiration	passover	ritual
creed	interpretation	Pentecost	roots
culture	Judaism	personal prayer	sacramental liturgy
discrimination	kaddish	prejudice	salvation
Eastern Church	lent	pornography	saving actions
eucharistic adoration	literary forms	prophet	sexism
			shema

PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Apostles Creed

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Prayers before and after meals(optional)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

JUNIOR HIGH – Seventh and eighth grade is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially these young people are “crossing the bridge” between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one’s unique pattern of development. However there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS – JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS

PHYSICAL

- Undergo a growth spurt
- Develop secondary sex characteristics
- Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image

COGNITIVE

- Begin abstract thinking
- Use a more complex decision making process
- Can reason based on possibilities not just experience
- Can be self-conscious and critical

IDENTITY

- Want to belong
- Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers
- Seek limited independence
- Value friendship based on trust and loyalty

MORAL

- Reason at conventional level
- Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws, parents, etc.

FAITH

- Desire active involvement and are open to service opportunities
- Are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God
- Look to the Church for the content and expression of faith

Realizing all these factors, a junior high religion program should be one that still involves the concrete, but also provides opportunities for “community building,” “reflection,” and “activity.”

These young teens are truly in a transition time. They need both faith structure and flexibility in a religion program.

Junior high school students, who can range in age from 11-15, present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: parents, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. These young people have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these younger adolescents must be attentive to the special circumstances, needs, and attitudes of junior high students.

CATECHETICAL APPROACH

Referencing statistical surveys, anecdotal information, catechetical experiences, available texts, and ecclesial and national documents (i.e. the *General Directory for Catechesis*, *Renewing the Vision*, etc.), the seventh and eighth grade curriculum has a different “look.” This format includes: Jesus, Morality, Personal Growth and Relationship, and Church.

A semester can be devoted to each subject area with the inclusion and integration of the Catholic Vision of Love program as well as Confirmation preparation. Each topic area has its own Message objectives, Scripture references, Vocabulary, and Prayer recommendations. ~~The concepts for review are common to the four modules.~~ (Please see addendum immediately below.) The Community, Worship, and Service objectives are also applicable to the two year curriculum, rather than separate objectives for each topic area.

As designed, this curriculum is realistic, focused, and flexible enough to meet the needs of the Junior High Student.

ADDENDUM OF AUGUST 2001

Having benefited from four years of using this curriculum, catechetical leaders from many parts of our diocese have asked for clearer curriculum guidelines for 7th and 8th grade. The following revision, then, becomes the standard for junior high catechesis in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, so that all 7th and 8th grade students will receive the systematic, comprehensive catechesis that is their right and the Church's responsibility.

Furthermore whereas immediate preparation for Confirmation can be integrated as stated above, many parishes are experiencing the benefits of addressing this immediate preparation outside of the regular catechetical sessions. The primary goal of 8th grade is not “Confirmation preparation;” treating it as such risks a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby it is implied that this is the final year of formal religious education. Subsequently the number of young people returning for youth ministry programs seems lower than it might be.

Rather, 8th grade is optimally spent reinforcing a pattern of annually revisiting the basic truths of our Catholic faith (with special topical emphases depending on circumstances) thereby instilling the lifelong faith formation called for by the *General Directory for Catechesis* (cf. GDC 70-72). Therefore although if need be Confirmation preparation can be included in regular sessions, it is recommended that such immediate preparation occur during special sessions, thereby freeing regular time for a more thorough review of all the sacraments in Grade 8.

7th GRADE

JESUS AND MORALITY (INCLUDING RESPECT FOR LIFE)

Themes:

Jesus became man and shared our human experience while remaining God. The Church looks upon Jesus' life, values, and teachings as the fullest revelation of God, His Father.

Our moral life is a lived response to God's covenant love. A Catholic, prompted by the Holy Spirit, makes choices by asking, "What does the mind and heart of Jesus and the Church tell us about this situation?"

REVIEW AND CLARIFY UNDERSTANDING:

- Identify Church as a community of believers in the Risen Lord with its beginnings in the People of God of the Old Testament.
- Recognize God as personally involved in the history of His people.
- Recall the place of oral tradition in the formation of the Bible.
- Understand that Jesus was a Jew, and that the roots of Christianity are founded in Judaism.
- Review the sacraments as sacred rites giving expression to covenant and commitment.
- Review Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as the sacraments of initiation and as sources of identity.
- Review Penance and Anointing of the Sick as sacraments of healing.
- Review Matrimony and Holy Orders as sacraments of commitment and service.
- Review parts of the Mass.
- Understand the Seasons of the Church Year and their importance.
- Know by heart the following prayers:
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Glory Be
 - Act of Contrition
 - Apostles Creed
 - Nicene Creed
 - Prayer to the Holy Spirit
 - Memorare
 - Prayers before and after meals (optional)

MESSAGE

JESUS

1. Jesus as God was also man, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit NCD #89; TTOC pp. 76-79, 80-81, 91, 96; CCC #464, 469, 480-482, 484.
2. The title 'Son of God' signifies the unique and eternal relationship of Jesus Christ to God his Father . . . To be a Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Divine Son of God TTOC p. 75; CCC #444,454.
3. Jesus Christ possesses two natures, one divine and the other human, not confused, but united in the one person of God's son TTOC pp. 80,81; CCC #481.
4. Jesus is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity NCD #83; TTOC p. 146; CCC #240-242, 253-255.
5. Mary is the Mother of God and model of faith NCD #106; TTOC pp. 89, 94-95, 205-206, 499; CCC #509, 721, 722, 963, 967.
6. Mary, "from the first instant of her conception (Immaculate Conception), was totally preserved from the stain of original sin, and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life" TTOC pp. 99, 100; CCC #508.
7. God the Father sent Jesus to be the Messiah, bringing good news, healing, and freedom to the poor and oppressed NCD #90; TTOC p. 84; CCC #713, 714.
8. The mysteries of Christ's public life are his baptism, temptations, announcement of the Kingdom, miracles, transfiguration, ascent to and entry into Jerusalem TTOC p. 102; CCC #535-560, 565-570.
9. Jesus' mission was to save people from sin and to lead them to the kingdom TTOC pp. 20, 110-112; CCC #608, 542-545.
10. The Beatitudes are a guide to the values of God's kingdom NCD #100; TTOC pp. 18, 328; CCC #1716-1717.
11. Jesus gave us a new commandment of love NCD #154; TTOC p. 248; CCC #1970.
12. Jesus' miracles are dramatic signs of God's power and love TTOC pp. 106, 107-108, 131; CCC 546-550.
13. Jesus did really die and rise bodily from the dead and through his death, and resurrection, he conquered death and the devil "who has the power of death." TTOC pp. 118-120; CCC # 635-636.
14. Jesus redeemed us from sin and death through His sufferings, death, and resurrection NCD #90; TTOC pp. 113, 119, 120; CCC #601-603.
15. The Gospels are a divinely inspired written expression of how the early Church understood its faith experience and the Risen Christ in their lives NCD # 53; TTOC pp. 102-103, 128-129; CCC #76, 124-127, 515, 573.

16. The holy women and the disciples came to believe in Christ's Resurrection through the discovery of the empty tomb, and especially through the appearances of the Risen One TTOC pp. 128-130; CCC #640-642, 657.
17. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present in the Church, in the sacraments, and in the Christian community NCD #60f, 92, 97; TTOC pp. 142, 359-360; CCC #1084-1088, 1107-1109.
18. Christ is the heavenly high priest, always interceding for us TTOC pp. 385-387; CCC #662-667.

MORALITY

1. The first and last point of reference of moral catechesis is Jesus Christ himself TTOC pp. 240,252; CCC #1698.
2. The moral life is an appropriate response to God's covenant love NCD #38; TTOC pp. 248-252; CCC #1965-1974.
3. The contentment, joy, fulfillment and fullness of heaven are supernatural, surpassing anything we are able to do or merit on our own TTOC pp. 478-480; CCC #1722, 1727.
4. There is a relationship between choices and consequences and between rights and responsibilities NCD #179; TTOC pp. 50, 55, 60-61; CCC #1731-1739.
5. In order for an act to be good, its object, intention and circumstances must all be good TTOC p. 246; CCC #1755, 1760.
6. There is a bond between freedom and truth. True freedom is the choice to embrace God's laws TTOC pp. 251-252; CCC pp. 1731-1733.
7. The conscience is our secret core, where God speaks in the depths of our hearts TTOC p. 241; CCC #1776, 1795.
8. Our conscience is a judgement of reason that helps us to recognize the moral quality of a human action TTOC p. 241; CCC #1778, 1796.
9. When our conscience accuses us, it means that God may be calling us to conversion TTOC p. 243; CCC # 1797.
10. The formation of our conscience is a life-long task requiring prayer, fidelity in the Church's teachings and the guidance of her magisterium TTOC p. 243; CCC #1779, 1784.

11. Catholic moral values reflect the heart and mind of Jesus NCD #100; TTOC pp. 240, 248-249; CCC #1813.
12. By the virtue of hope we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness TTOC pp. 257, 258; CCC #1817-1821, 1843.
13. The moral life demands conforming our minds and hearts to that of Jesus Christ NCD #99, 100, 103, 105; TTOC pp. 239-240; CCC #1694.
14. There is objective evil TTOC pp. 62, 65, 66; CCC #311.
15. There are moral absolutes (right and wrong) NCD #101; TTOC p. 246; CCC #1756.
16. The moral law finds its permanent expression in the ten commandments, the “privileged expression of the natural law” NCD #105; TTOC p. 247; CCC #2061-2064, 2070.

1st Commandment: I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.

17. The first commandment binds us to hope in God. Sins opposed to it include despair, presumption and tempting God TTOC p. 266; CCC #2090-2092, 2119.
18. The first commandment calls us to worship God alone. Opposed to true worship are idolatry, sacrilege and simony TTOC pp. 266, 267; CCC #2099-2100, 2120-2121, 2136, 2139.
19. Idolatry means to worship a false God. It also means to put anything or anyone in the place of God. TTOC p. 267; CCC #2112-2114.

2nd Commandment: You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

20. The second commandment calls us to respect the name of Jesus TTOC p. 267; CCC #2145.
21. God’s name is dishonored in especially grave ways by false oaths, perjury, and cursing TTOC p. 267; CCC #2150-2152, 2163.
22. Blasphemy is the use of the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints in an offensive way TTOC p. 267; CCC #2162.

3rd Commandment: Remember to keep holy the LORD’S Day

23. Sunday fulfills the Sabbath; it is the day of the Resurrection TTOC p. 267; CCC #2174-2176, 2190-2191.
24. The Sunday liturgy is the heart of the Church’s life. By participating, we show ourselves to be members of the Catholic community TTOC p. 267; CCC # 2177-2178, 2182.
25. Catholics have the privilege and obligation of attending Sunday Mass; not to do so is a grave sin TTOC p. 267; CCC #2180-2181, 2192.

4th Commandment: Honor your father and your mother.

26. The family is based on marriage, which exists for the good of the spouse and the procreation and education of children TTOC pp. 272, 296, 298; CCC #2201, 2249.

27. The family is seen as “a man and woman united in marriage together with children” TTOC p. 296; CCC #2202.
28. The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit TTOC p. 296; CCC #2205.
29. All baptized persons can and must participate in the life of the Church; therefore the Catholic community must manifest compassion and concern for those that find themselves in situations of separation and divorce TTOC pp. 448, 449; CCC #1651.
30. Children must always show respect for their parents and support them in old age TTOC pp. 296, 300; CCC #2218.
31. The duties of citizens are to pay taxes, vote and defend their country TTOC pp. 300-304; CCC #2239-2240, 2255.

5th Commandment: You shall not kill.

32. Concern for human rights, especially for human life, is a basic Gospel value NCD #152-153, 165a, 167; TTOC p. 308, GDC #18-19; CCC #2258, 2273, 2297.
33. Human life in all its various stages, from conception to natural death, has intrinsic value NCD #167, 1056; GDC #24; TTOC pp. 273, 289-309; CCC #2260.
34. “From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is abortion willed as an end or a means, is a [crime against life], gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.” TTOC pp. 279-280; CCC #2322.
35. Stereotyping the physically or mentally challenged is to be avoided and persons with disabilities are to be accepted. NCD #138, 195, 231; GDC #179, 189; TTOC pp. 237-238; CCC #2270-2319, 2322-2323.
36. The Church opposes the death penalty E.V. #56-58, TTOC p. 275; CCC #2266-2267, 2306.
37. Direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons. It is a grave sin and is always evil NCD #167; E.V. #64-65; TTOC pp. 272-78; CCC #2276-2279.
38. Suicide is wrong because we are stewards, not owners, of our lives NCD #200; E.V. #52, 66; TTOC pp. 274, 278; CCC #2280-2283, 2325.

39. Child abuse, ageism, racism, sexism or a lack of reverence toward persons with physical or mental disabilities is evil NCD #28-29, 138, 195, 202, 231; GDC #179-180, 186-189; TTOC pp. 237-238, 305, 431, 448, CCC# 2259-2291.

40. “The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life Clandestine production and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices.” They constitute direct cooperation with evil TTOC p. 269; CCC #2291.

41. Justice and charity lead to peace; injustice to war TTOC p. 327; CCC #2304, 2317.

6th Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.

42. Human sexuality is a gift from God to establish an intimate and life-giving family bond TTOC pp. 282-283; CCC #2331-2333.

43. The sexual act finds its place only in a life-long marriage between a man and woman; this excludes masturbation, fornication, sex for engaged couples, “living together,” trial marriage, homosexual acts and adultery TTOC pp. 281, 284; CCC #2350-2353, 2360, 2380-2381, 2390-2391, 2396, 2400.

44. Culture has a great effect on sexual morality. Pornography, prostitution and rape totally degrade sexuality and divorce is a grave offense against the dignity of marriage TTOC pp. 431-432; CCC #2354, 2382-2385, 2396, 2400.

45. Every marriage act must be open to children; this excludes the use of artificial contraception TTOC pp. 445-447; CCC #2366, 2398-2399.

46. Morally sound medical treatment must exclude: harming or killing any human person in the hope of helping others (as “compassionate” abortion or taking stem cells from embryos); cloning or in vitro fertilization of humans; treating patients without their informed consent; or refusing ordinary care to the infirm NCD #19; TTOC p. 279; CCC #2275.

7th Commandment: You shall not steal.

47. The seventh commandment calls us to be good stewards of the world God gave to us TTOC p. 293; CCC # 2415, 2456.

48. The search for solidarity increasingly has international implications; rich nations must work for the development of poorer nations TTOC pp. 301-302; CCC #2437-2441.

49. To work for the common good in economic and political realities is especially the role of the Catholic laity TTOC pp. 303-309; CCC #2442.

8th Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

50. Reputation and honor are aspects of a person’s human dignity. These are injured by rash judgement, detraction, calumny, and gossip TTOC pp. 288-291; CCC #2477-2479, 2507.

9th Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

51. The moral life demands that we embrace chastity, the successful integration of sexuality within the person NCD #191; TTOC p. 286; CCC #2337-2340.
52. Purity requires modesty, which recognizes and protects the dignity of the person TTOC pp. 280-288; CCC #2521-2522, 2533.

10th Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

53. True Christians set their hearts on the Kingdom of heaven; this makes them detached from all material things TTOC p. 330; CCC#2544-47, 2551, 2556.
54. Sin is a rupture in our relationship with God that is always an intentional choice knowingly to do evil NCD #98; TTOC p. 262; CCC #1849-1850.
55. There are both venial and mortal sins NCD #98; TTOC p. 262; CCC 1855.
56. We can sin by cooperating in others' sin. Sin also has a social structure TTOC pp. 431-432; CCC #1868-1869.
57. Skills, such as discernment and critical evaluation, are necessary to help students identify the cultural values that have influenced them NCD #17-22, 103, 105, 158, 170 pt. 4; TTOC pp. 20-21, 53, 239, 293; CCC #1886-1888.
58. Subsidiarity means that nothing should be done at a higher level of society when it could be accomplished at a lower TTOC pp. 295-296, 301-302; CCC #1883-1885, 1894.
59. We have a responsibility to take part in public life TTOC pp. 303, 313-315; CCC # 1913-1915, 1926.
60. There is a Spirit-filled Catholic response to social issues such as poverty, environmental abuse, violence, and racism NCD #105b; TTOC pp. 20-21, 431; CCC #1935-1938.
61. Differences of "talents" are part of God's plan and call for sharing. Sinful inequalities are contrary to the Gospel TTOC pp. 293-294, 300-302; CCC #1936-1938, 1946-1947.
62. Catholics believe in a true merit of eternal life, due to our new life of grace TTOC pp. 229-230, 331-332, 334-335; CCC # 2009, 2026.
63. Developing the moral virtues is key to living the moral life NCD #105; TTOC pp. 250-251.
64. The Catholic Church has the right to teach on questions of natural law, because its observance is necessary for salvation TTOC pp. 244-246; CCC #2036, 2050.
65. Prayer and the Eucharist are essential components of the moral life NCD #98, 104, 191; TTOC p. 286; CCC #1393-1395, 1811, 2340.

(The vocation classes, as well as the virtue and sacramental classes in the seventh grade curriculum of CVOL deal with topics of morality. During or following this segment would be an appropriate place to introduce the CVOL lessons Gr. 7.)

SCRIPTURE STORIES TO KNOW/HEAR

JESUS

Luke 2:22-40 Presentation in the Temple

Luke 19:9-10; 4:16-21; John 10:10 Purposes of Jesus' Coming

Mark 1:23-28 Jesus' power over evil

Mark 1:40-45 Jesus' compassion for others; cure of leper

Mark 6:34-44 Feeding the hungry

Mark 10:13-16 Blessing the children

Mark 3:13-19; Luke 5:1-11; Luke 6:12-16 The call of the Twelve Apostles, Vocations

Luke 11:1-4; 11:5-13 Jesus and the value of prayer

John 13:4-7 & 34-35; Matthew 5:43-48 & 19:20-27; Luke 10:25-27 & 6:27-49 "Following" Jesus' Way

Matthew 25:14-30; I Corinthians 12:4-11 Service through the use of personal talents

Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus' teaching on the Last Judgment

John 14:26; 20:19-23; Matthew 28:17-20 Jesus sends the Spirit

Matthew 5:1-12 Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

Luke 9:28-36 Transfiguration of Jesus

John 6:26-69 Foreshadowing of the Real Presence in the Eucharist

Matthew 16:15-20 Peter acknowledges Jesus as Messiah

Accounts of Jesus' nature, miracles, and miraculous cures

The Gospel narrations of Jesus' death and resurrection

MORALITY

Exodus 10:1-17 Ten Commandments

Exodus 23:1-9 Laws

Wisdom 1:1-16 – Justice

Matthew 25 Parables

Matthew 5:1-12 Beatitudes

John 8:1-13 Woman caught in Adultery

John 13:1-20 Washing of the Feet

John 15 Vine and Branches

Romans 7 Freedom/Law

Galatians 4:1-10 God's Heirs

I Corinthians 13 Love is...

VOCABULARY

abba

apostle

ascension

assumption

authority

beatitudes

chastity

commandments

commitment

conscience

consequence

corporal works of mercy

covenant

culture

disciple

evangelist

family

free will

gospel

grace

human sexuality

incarnation

kingdom

kingdom of God

messiah

miracle

morality

mortal sin

new testament

parable

paschal mystery

prayer

precepts of the church

responsibility

resurrection

sacrament

social justice

trinity

values

venial sin

virtue

COMMUNITY (Grades 7 & 8)

Students Will:

1. Understand they are called to continue Christ's mission of forgiving, healing, and reconciling one another.
2. Create a family and classroom environment where each person is accepted as unique and treated justly.
3. Perceive themselves as part of the Church: the People of God, the Body of Christ.
4. Discuss the future of the Church and what the adolescent role in the Church might be.
5. Appreciate that belonging to the Church means participating in its mission.
6. Accept the invitation and responsibility to become part of parish community experiences.
7. Identify and appreciate special gifts and talents which can be used for oneself and others.
8. Understand their story in light of the story of salvation.
9. Discern the different kinds of levels of commitment determined by different relationships in the community.
10. Develop the skills necessary for building relationships and community life, such as trust, self-disclosure, and communication.
11. Appreciate that all individual moral decisions affect one's relationships with self, others, and God.
12. Examine how social ills and injustices affect the lives of all people as well as their responsibility for others even when suffering is perceived as a global experience.

WORSHIP (Grades 7 & 8)

Students Will:

1. Experience prayer as a deepening of personal relationship with Jesus.
2. Experience various forms of prayer, such as silent meditation, prayer with Scripture, centering prayer, spontaneous prayer, formal prayer, prayer with song, and liturgy of the hours.
3. Develop a habit of daily prayer to seek guidance and discern one's vocation.

4. Plan and participate in class/school liturgies, such as the rosary and stations of the cross according to the liturgical season.
5. Experience days of reflection and retreats as opportunities for personal spiritual growth.
6. Appreciate the Church's ritual life as pluralistic and multi-cultural.
7. Appreciate the need for the frequent reception of the sacraments of penance and Eucharist as ways to participate in the worship of the Church and to grow in God's grace.
8. Understand the sacraments of initiation as a source of identity.
9. Know by heart the following formal prayers:

Sign of the Cross
 Our Father
 Hail Mary
 Glory Be
 Blessing Before Meals
 Apostles Creed
 Prayers of Aspiration
 Mysteries of the Rosary
 Act of Contrition
 Hail Holy Queen

SERVICE (Grades 7 & 8)

Students Will:

1. Recognize that in baptism all Christians receive a call to service.
2. Develop ways to put into practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.
3. Reflect on and participate in service opportunities for oneself within the parish and local community.
4. Become aware of local and global social concerns.
5. Become involved in service outreach projects, clothing and food collections, and fund-raising drives.
6. Realize how persons give witness to their faith through their work.
7. Identify traditional Catholic saints whose lives were dedicated to service.
8. Interpret the importance of modern witnesses in the Catholic Church.

8th Grade

THE CHURCH, SACRAMENTS, AND GROWTH IN HOLINESS

Themes:

The Catholic Church is our faith community given life by the Holy Spirit. It is Christ's presence in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit which gives glory and praise to the Father and brings His redeeming love to all. As Catholics, we claim Jesus as the source of all teaching, sacramental life, our mission, and our ministries. As people of God we continue the mission of Jesus through active and committed participation in the life of the Church.

The sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the spirit.

Building a strong and realistic concept of oneself is based on Jesus' vision of being fully human. As a child of God, created in His image and likeness, we are called to holiness and eternal life in God's Kingdom. Developing relationships with peers, parents, and other adults should be based on honesty, love, and respect, leading us into a deeper life and faith and a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

REVIEW AND CLARIFY UNDERSTANDING:

- Briefly review the Church's teaching on the Incarnation and Redemption.
- Recall the importance of strengthening our relationship with God, self and others.
- Review the Ten Commandments as a gift, a revelation of God, and the privileged expression of the natural law.
- Recall that the moral life is a response to God's love.
- Recall that respect for human life is a basic Gospel value.
- Know by heart the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Apostles Creed

Hail Holy Queen

Mysteries of the Rosary

Prayers of Aspiration

Act of Contrition

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Memorare

Blessing Before Meals

MESSAGE

CHURCH

1. We are prompted by the Spirit to know the Father through the Son NCD #83, TTOC pp. 135, 144; CCC #424.
2. We come to know Jesus through the Church and become more like Him NCD #88; TTOC p. 156; CCC #426, 429.
3. The Catholic Church is an invisible communion in the Spirit, and a visible community with a hierarchical structure, and the Pope at her head. These two components form but one mystery, which can be recognized only in faith TTOC pp. 141-144, 156, 159, 161-162; CCC #765, 771, 779.
4. The Church is a mystery which can be described through images such as the Mystical Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, Flock of Christ, Vineyard, and People of God NCD #63, 64, 73, 93; TTOC pp. 156, 159, 163; CCC #772, 782, 791.
5. The Church is Trinitarian; as People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, she mirrors the very unity of the Trinity TTOC pp. 159-164; CCC #782, 789, 797, 810.
6. The marks of the Church are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic NCD #72; TTOC p. 165; CCC #750.
7. Membership in the Church requires the faith-filled act of baptism, full initiation through the celebration of Eucharist and confirmation, and continuing participation in the life of the Church NCD #115; TTOC p. 401; CCC #782, 1212.
8. The sacraments are a continuation of Jesus' ministry and presence to the world and a gift of strength and life to His people, the Church NCD #97; TTOC pp. 158-159; CCC #1115, 1116, 1123.
9. The Church's creeds are expressions of faith with their foundation in the belief of the early Church, developed in the early centuries in response to new doctrinal questions NCD #45; TTOC p. 80 footnotes, pp. 148-149; CCC #187, 192.
10. Tradition contains the collected teachings and lived experience of the Church. It must be understood in relation to a faith commitment to God manifest in Jesus Christ NCD #59, 93; TTOC p. 186; CCC #78.
11. Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, under the guidance of the Magisterium, contain the fullness of God's divine revelation NCD #59, 93; TTOC p. 186; CCC #78.
12. The Church is an organized structure, and different kinds of leadership roles exist within it, both clerical and lay NCD #93; TTOC pp. 159, 163-164; CCC #873.

13. The bishops form a college of which the Pope is the head CCC #877, 879-895 TTOC pp. 173-174, 185, 195.
14. The Pope and the bishops in communion with him constitute the Magisterium of the Church. When they teach definitively, they enjoy the Church's infallibility. When they teach authoritatively, the faithful respond with a religious assent, an assent based on the trust one places in the Church as founded by Christ TTOC pp. 186-193; CCC #889-892.
15. The Church proclaims the Good News NCD #71; TTOC pp. 182-183; CCC #748, 767, 849.
16. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church continues to develop throughout history NCD #92, 93; TTOC pp. 144, 157-158; CCC #759.
17. The Church is a group of people that is inclusive and is a multi-faceted faith community with a rich varied liturgical tradition NCD #15, 16, 73; TTOC pp. 173, 221; CCC #775, 814.
18. All Christian Churches are part of the People of God and have some albeit imperfect linkage with the Roman Catholic Church as the one true Church NCD #75, 95; TTOC p. 175; CCC #818, 819.
19. Only the Catholic Church has the full Teaching of Christ and full means of salvation, but other Christians share elements of unity. Those born into non-Catholic Christian communities do not share in the sin of separation TTOC pp. 213-219; CCC #816-819, 830, 837-838, 870.
20. All salvation comes from Christ through the Church, but those ignorant of Christ and the Church may also, by God's grace, be saved TTOC pp. 210, 221; CCC #846-847.
21. Mary cooperated with Christ in the work of redemption TTOC pp. 198, 199-201; CCC #964, 968, 973.
22. Mary is the Mother of the Church and the perfect model for all Christians to follow NCD #106; TTOC p. 198; CCC #963, 968, 2030.
23. We recognize important persons and events in the Catholic Church, in the United States, and the local Church of Pittsburgh NCD #73 g, i, ii; TTOC pp. 174-175; CCC #752, 833.

SACRAMENTS

1. Christ acting in the Church is the ultimate celebrant of every sacrament TTOC pp. 352-353, 359-360, 362; CCC 1070, 1076.
2. The Paschal mystery is a real, historical event; yet it participates in eternity, so that it can be present to all times and places TTOC pp. 353-354, 360-361; CCC #1085.

3. Christ is present in the liturgy in the Bishop/Priest presider, the Word of God, in the assembly, and especially in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine TTOC pp. 352-254, 359-360; CCC#1088.
4. Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us, but makes them present; in each celebration an outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes the Paschal mystery present TTOC pp. 353-354, 359-362; CCC #1104.
5. The fruit of sacramental life pertains to both the individual and the Church as a whole TTOC pp. 354, 363-364; CCC #1134.
6. In the liturgical celebration, we are joined to the heavenly liturgy TTOC p. 361; CCC #1136-1139, 1187.
7. The Church “in the course of the year, . . . unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and Nativity through his Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord” TTOC p.354; CCC #1194.
8. In the liturgy, and especially in the sacraments, there are unchangeable parts, which are divinely given, and parts that the Church has the authority to adapt to different cultures TTOC pp. 364-365, 373, 374; CCC #1205, 1209.
9. Baptism and the Church are necessary for salvation. But martyrs for the faith (Baptism of Blood), catechumens who die, and all those who seek God in ignorance of Baptism (Baptism of Desire) can be saved without Baptism by water NCD #116; TTOC p. 412; CCC #1257-1260, 1276-1277, 1281.
10. The fruits of Baptism are forgiveness of original and personal sin and birth into new life TTOC pp. 407-410; CCC # 1213, 1263.
11. The baptized are incorporated into the Church and share in the priesthood, prophetic mission and kingship of Christ TTOC 409-410; CCC #1267-1269, 1279.
12. Though Confirmation is sometimes called “the sacrament of Christian maturity,” that does not mean its reception must await physical, mental or social maturity NCD #118; TTOC p. 417; CCC #1308.
13. The gifts and the fruits of the Spirit enable us to develop our talents as members of the Church and strengthen us to serve God as He wills TTOC pp. 163-164, 327-328, 419-420; CCC #1829-1832.
14. The Eucharist is thanksgiving to God the Father for all of creation NCD #120; TTOC pp. 378-380; CCC #1356-1361.
15. The Eucharist is a memorial of Christ’s Passover in the sense of anamnesis; it not only recalls, but also makes it present NCD #121, TTOC pp. 370-371; CCC#1362-1367, 1409.

16. In the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ; this is called Transubstantiation. Christ is totally, completely and substantially present in both or either form of the bread and wine NCD #121, TTOC pp. 383, 500; CCC #1374-1376, 1413.
17. The ultimate fruit of the Eucharist is the fullness of divine life and unity of the Mystical Body of Christ. This is why divisions in the Church are so painful and why we must pray for reunion NCD #165, TTOC pp. 163-164; CCC #1396, 1398.
18. Baptism does not remove the inclination to sin called concupiscence and so sin (a rupture in our relationship with God that is always an intentional choice to do evil knowingly) remains NCD #98, 117, TTOC pp. 199-200, 262; CCC #1426, 1849-50.
19. For the faithful, “individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.” NCD #125-126; TTOC pp. 425-427; CCC #1484, 1497.
20. The proper time for receiving the Anointing of the Sick is certainly “when the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age.” NCD #127-128; TTOC pp. 434-435; CCC #1514, 1528.
21. Each time Christians fall seriously ill, they may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after they have received it, the illness worsens NCD #128; TTOC p. 436; CCC #1515.
22. The special grace of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has as its effects: the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church: the strengthening, peace and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person is unable to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; the preparation for passing over to eternal life NCD #128; TTOC p. 391; CCC# #1520-1523, 1527, 1532.
23. “Through the ordained ministry, that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.” NCD #132; TTOC p. 391; CCC #1549.
24. Called by God through the Church, priests are ordained to serve as co-workers with the bishop in serving the Catholic community NCD #132; TTOC p. 392; CCC #1551, 1562, 1578.
25. Priests act in the person of Christ and in the name of the whole Church NCD #133; TTOC pp. 386-389; CCC# 1552-1553.
26. The priesthood reaches its high point in the celebration of the Eucharist NCD# 132-133; TTOC p. 387; CCC #1566.

27. “The Church confers the Sacrament of Holy Orders only on baptized men (viri), whose suitability for the exercise of the ministry has been duly recognized.” NCD #132; TTOC pp. 393-394; CCC #1577, 1598.
28. Priests remain celibate for the sake of the kingdom of heaven NCD #132-133, TTOC p. 395; CCC #1579, 1599.
29. Jesus taught that marriage is permanent and cannot be dissolved; the Church cannot change that teaching NCD #130, TTOC p. 413 1643-1644, 1646-1647, 1664; CCC #1605, 1615, 1638, 1640-1641.
30. Christ is present in the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony to enable the couple to live out what might seem at times an impossible demand NCD #131; TTOC pp. 282-283; CCC# 1615, 1641-1642, 1648
31. Some persons freely embrace virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven NCD #94; TTOC p. 319; CCC #1618-1620
32. By its very nature, marriage must be open to the procreation and education of children NCD #131; TTOC p. 445; CCC #1643, 1652-1653.
33. Persons who are divorced and remarried without an annulment remain in the Church but cannot receive Communion. NCD #27a; TTOC pp. 388, 454; CCC #1665.

GROWTH IN HOLINESS

1. All people are created in God’s image NCD #105b, 156; TTOC pp. 53, 54-55, 56, 58; CCC #355, 1700, 1702, 1934.
2. Every Christian is called to holiness TTOC pp. 239, 313, 322; CCC #2013, 2028.
3. Each person is unique and gifted NCD #60, TTOC pp. 294, 310, 312; CCC #1936-1937.
4. Every person has the responsibility to develop a personal and communal or ecclesial faith relationship with Jesus NCD #100, 173; TTOC pp. 18, 19, 23-24, 230, 326, 331; CCC #426.
5. Catholic values, such as the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and the cardinal and theological virtues, shape our lives NCD #105, 162, 170; TTOC pp. 251, 268-269, 327; CCC #1804, 1805, 1812-1813, 2447.
6. Scripture provides selfless views of friendship NCD #102, 173; TTOC p. 237; CCC #1829.
7. There are role models – local, global, and historical – who exemplify Catholic values NCD #105, 162, 179; TTOC pp. 243, 468; CCC #828, 1717, 2030.

8. Skills are needed to engage in healthy relationships with peers, parents, and other adults as well as a vibrant life of prayer and life in the Church NCD #102, 173, 179; TTOC pp. 19-21, 294; CCC #2217, 2219, 2220.

(The vocation, virtue and sacramental classes in the eighth curriculum of CVOL deal with how students live their lives and deal with others. During or following this segment would be an appropriate place to introduce the CVOL lesson Gr. 8.)

SCRIPTURE STORIES TO KNOW/HEAR

CHURCH

Acts 1:12-14; 2:42-47 Accounts of the Early Church

1 Peter 2:9-10 Church as God's People

John 16:7, 13 Promise of the Spirit

Acts 2:1-41; John 20:19-23 Pentecost Account

Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:16-20 Command to preach the Good News to all Nations

Matthew 16:13-19 Authority of Peter

Luke 6:12-16 Selection of the Apostles

Luke 10:1-12; Matthew 5:13-16 Mission of the Disciples

Acts 6:1-6 Appointment of Deacons

John 21:25 Tradition

Matthew 5:17-20; 5:38-48; 5:3-12 Laws

Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:14-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26 Jesus Institutes the Eucharist

John 19:25-27 Mary as Mother of the Church

GROWTH IN HOLINESS

Genesis 2:4-3:24 Life according to God's will

Genesis 12:1-2; 22:1-19 Abraham, person of faith

1 Samuel 18:1-5; 20:11-42 Friendship of David and Jonathan

Psalm 8 Dignity and power of the person

Psalm 139:13-15 All knowing God

Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha

John 11:1-27 Lazarus

Matthew 5:3-10 Beatitudes

Luke 1:26-38 Mary says Yes

1 Corinthians 13:5-7 Love is...

John 4:14-26 Woman at the well

PRAYERS AND PRECEPTS

Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity

Angelus

Apostles Creed

Great Commandment

Hail Holy Queen

Magnificat

Memorare

Nicene Creed

Prayer for Peace

VOCABULARY

apostles

beatitudes

canon law

commandments

commitment

communion of saints

covenant

diocese

dogma

ecumenical council

empathy

encyclical

evangelization

free will

grace

heresy

incarnation

infallibility

integrity

laity

messiah

ministry

mystagogia

papacy

precepts of the church

providence

relics

rites

schism

trinity

Vatican Council II

virtue

vocation

IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

Theme: As the Creed is the story of the Church, it is also the faith story of each member. The following themes have been chosen from the Creed as topics for the immediate preparation for the sacrament of confirmation (SIP #102.4). The topic could be covered in a regular class session, a day of reflection, a parent/child evening session, etc.

- God the Creator
- Jesus and the Paschal Mystery
- Holy Spirit the Sanctifier
- Church as Community of Life
- Practice of Virtue
- Sacrament and Sacraments of Initiation (History of Confirmation)
- Symbols of the Spirit: Rite of Confirmation

Note: The Sacrament of Confirmation, A Four-Part Video Study Series with The Most Reverend Donald W. Wuerl, STD is to be integrated into the immediate four final weeks of preparation for confirmation.

MESSAGE

GOD THE CREATOR (SIP 102.4)

1. God is the creator who creates all things good TTOC pp. 39, 42, 43; CCC #290, 299.
2. All of creation is the result of God's unconditional love NCD #85; TTOC pp. 42, 43; CCC #293.
3. Happiness depends upon understanding who God created us to be TTOC pp. 50, 59, 61; CCC #282, 301.
4. Through personal prayer and the community of believers, we are part of salvation history NCD #88; TTOC p. 144; CCC #1092, 1095.
5. We play a role in keeping all God's creation sacred NCD #88; TTOC p. 50, 54-55, 60-61; CCC #307.

JESUS AND THE PASCHAL MYSTERY (SIP #102.1C)

1. God so loved the world that Jesus entered the human experience NCD #53 , 87; TTOC pp. 119-120, 227; CCC #422.
2. The humanity of Jesus is the standard for our own humanity NCD #89 & 90; TTOC pp. 19-20, 230; CCC #459, 521.

3. Our daily life journey is related to the Paschal Mystery NCD #91; TTOC p. 366; CCC #556, 618.
4. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is the Paschal Mystery NCD #90; TTOC p. 360; CCC #512, 571.
5. Baptism is immersion into the life of Christ NCD #116, 117; TTOC p. 407; CCC #537, 1214; SIP #102.2.
6. In the Eucharist we are offered the real presence of Christ NCD #121; TTOC pp. 381-382; CCC #1374.
7. We are called to become the living presence of Christ in the world. NCD #121; TTOC pp. 308-309; CCC #521.

HOLY SPIRIT THE SANCTIFIER (SIP #102.2)

1. The Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Blessed Trinity sent by the Father and Son to live within us and unite us NCD #83; TTOC p. 135; CCC #686.
2. We are called to membership within the community of believers through the Spirit NCD #92; TTOC pp. 135, 142; CCC #747; SIP #102.2
3. The Spirit strengthens our relationship with Jesus and empowers us to continue His mission through the gifts of the Spirit NCD #83; TTOC pp. 140, 142, 327-328; CCC #737, 768; SIP #102.2.
4. The Spirit empowers us to proclaim Jesus, the person and message, “to the ends of the earth” NCD #92, TTOC p. 140; CCC #739, 1285; SIP #102.2.
5. The Holy Spirit enlightens our choices so that we come to recognize the will of God in our lives NCD #92; TTOC pp. 327-328; CCC #1742, 1788.

CHURCH AS COMMUNITY OF LIFE (SIP #102.1)

1. The Church is a family of faith called to holiness through baptism NCD #68, 94; TTOC pp. 159, 160; CCC #753, 1267; SIP #102.2.
2. The faith family, Church, offers support guidance and care for its members throughout life NCD #70, 72b, 92, 93; TTOC p. 159; CCC #794,1269.
3. Godparents and sponsors represent the Christian community and are to be models of faith TTOC p. 406, CCC #1255.

4. The communion of saints is the community of all believers, living and dead NCD #107; TTOC pp. 467-468; CCC #957, 958.
5. Liturgy is a celebration of the community whose life and faith is nurtured by the word and the Eucharist and by the presence of each individual NCD #65, 72a; TTOC pp. 159, 377-378, 380; CCC #752; SIP 102.2
6. The Church is at once human and divine NCD #68; TTOC pp. 165-166; CCC #827.

PRACTICE OF VIRTUE (SIP #102.ID)

1. There is power in and responsibility for God's gift of free will NCD #101, 103; TTOC p. 55; CCC #1731.
2. Personal and social sins exist in our own life experience NCD #165b, 170; TTOC p. 262, 431; CCC #401, 1868, 1869.
3. We need to take ownership for our personal choices NCD #170; TTOC pp. 60-61, 68; #CCC 1745.
4. The Christian virtue of hope is based on the belief that Jesus triumphed over evil NCD #98; TTOC p. 65-66, 68; CCC #420, 617.
5. Our ability to choose good is empowered by the Spirit NCD #57, 98; TTOC p. 327; CCC #1788, 1811.

SACRAMENT AND SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (History of Confirmation) (SIP #102.1B)

1. The "seven sacraments touch all stages and important moments of a Christian's life" NCD #114; TTOC pp. 362, 416; CCC #1210.
2. The sacraments of initiation "lay the foundations of every Christian's life" NCD #115; TTOC p. 401; CCC #1212, 1533, SIP #102.2.
3. The reception of the sacrament of confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace NCD #118; TTOC pp. 416, 418; CCC #1285, 1304; SIP #102.2.
4. In the sacrament of confirmation the confirmed are "enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit" TTOC p. 419; CCC #1285; SIP #102.2.
5. The history of the sacrament of confirmation should be understood NCD #119; TTOC pp. 416-417; CCC #1290-1292; SIP #102.1b.

SYMBOLS OF THE SPIRIT: RITE OF CONFIRMATION

1. The renewal of baptismal vows in the Rite of Confirmation affirms the connection between the initiation sacraments CCC #1298; SIP #102.1A.
2. The Christian life is one of continual conversion from sin to a life of grace NCD #99; TTOC pp. 329-330, 331-332' CCC #1426; SIP #102.3.
3. The Paschal Mystery triumphs over sin and through personal conversion we become “other Christs” to the world NCD #99, 105c; TTOC pp. 360-361, 362; CCC #739, 1067, 1068.
4. The ancient liturgical gesture of imposing hands symbolizes the confirming of the divine power of the Holy Spirit TTOC p. 414; CCC #1288; SIP 102.2.
5. Each confirmed person is empowered by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to share their faith with others as they continue the mission of Jesus TTOC pp. 327-328, 415, 419; CCC #1303, 1831; SIP #102.2.
6. The anointing with oil in the Rite of Confirmation symbolizes selection and strength as it did in biblical times TTOC pp. 414-415; CCC #1293.
7. Being marked with the sign of the cross is a reminder that we share in the life of Christ NCD #118; TTOC p. 508; CCC #265.
8. The Amen is the candidate’s personal affirmation of their desire to be a spiritual witness of Christ in the world TTOC p. 507; CCC #1062, 1064.

GUIDELINES REGARDING THE HUMAN SCIENCES AND CATECHETICS

In 1990, the bishops of our nation published **Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials**. In this document the bishops state that catechetical materials "must be based on accepted learning theory, established pedagogical principles, and practical learning strategies" (GDSCM #71). The materials must also "use language and images appropriate to the age level and developmental stages and special needs of those being catechized" (GDSCM #72).

This notion of the need for age and developmental appropriateness is further elucidated in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**. "Whoever teaches must become all things to all men (1 Cor. 9:22), to win everyone to Christ... Above all, teachers must not imagine that a single kind of soul has been entrusted to them, and that consequently it is lawful to teach and form equally all the faithful in true piety with one and the same method! Let them realize that some are in Christ as newborn babes, others as adolescents, and still others as adults in full command of their powers... Those who are called to the ministry of preaching must suit their words to the maturity and understanding of their hearers, as they hand on the teaching of the mysteries of faith and the rules of moral conduct" (CCC #24).

The above documents establish the necessity for catechists to work with the developmental needs of the children who come before them. In order to do this, they must know something about such developmental issues.

Pope John Paul II in **On Catechesis In Our Time** states: "Among the many prestigious sciences of man that are nowadays making immense advances, pedagogy is certainly one of the most important. The attainments of the other sciences - biology, psychology, sociology - are providing it with valuable elements" (CT #58). Our own National Catechetical Directory and the Documents of Vatican II both state: "The Church encourages the use of the biological, social, and psychological sciences in pastoral care" (NCD #175). Revelation itself admits of a specific divine pedagogy. "God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ" (CCC #53). It stands to reason that, as God dealt with our ancestors in the faith, he deals with us in the same way. He grants growth in the faith gradually as he prepares us to accept the truth.

"Because the life of faith is related to human development, it passes through stages or levels; furthermore, different people possess aspects of faith to different degrees. This is true, for example, of the comprehensiveness and intensity with which they accept God's word, of their ability to explain it, and of their ability to apply it to life. Catechesis is meant to help at each stage of human development and lead ultimately to full identification with Jesus" (NCD #174).

The way in which the findings of these sciences are utilized is important. It is essential to point out that the sciences, of themselves, do not cause faith nor growth in faith and neither, for that matter,

does the catechist. Faith is a gift from God. Nonetheless, the human sciences "help us understand how people grow in their capacity for responding to God's grace" (NCD #175).

Child development is an extremely complex subject. Different children develop at different rates and in phases which often overlap. The National Catechetical Directory corroborates this notion by stating that no one explanation of the stages of human development and its implications for growth is either exclusive or exhaustive (NCD #175).

The behavioral sciences do not supply doctrinal or moral content nor were they intended to do so (see above reference to growth in capacity to respond in faith) (NCD #175). They need to be monitored and evaluated according to new findings and developments (NCD #175). While the sciences do provide general references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken in account.

Catechists who are parents or those who work with children in other capacities will recognize specific characteristics from the children they encounter. The broad developmental characteristics contained herein are meant to aid catechists in developing an assessment of the capabilities and needs of the children as well as apprising their own expectations for student comprehension and participation.

- The information in this section **Background for Catechists** was drawn from the following sources:
- The National Catechetical Directory
- Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning, United States Catholic Conference, Washington DC, 1990
- Curriculum from other Dioceses (see lists in Introductory section)
- Major Catechetical Publishers

PRINCIPLES OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Profile of the Children

FAITH DEVELOPMENT PRESCHOOL THROUGH KINDERGARTEN

Children

- need parents and family life as a ground for their faith
- view size, power, and position as reasons for responding to God, parents, and rules
- need to share in common language and rituals of faith
- can begin to develop a personal relationship with God, especially through prayer
- form dispositions toward the world and attitudes toward worship that will last a lifetime
- need continuity and routine to provide order to their world
- focus on images rather than reality
- need help to distinguish imagination from reality
- need assurance that scary wishes do not make bad things come true
- view events in isolation

FAITH DEVELOPMENT PRIMARY - GRADES ONE THROUGH THREE

Children

- grow in their relationship with God particularly through prayer based on life experience
- vest great authority in parents and other trusted adults
- desire to join in the ritual of the parish community as seen in the desire to participate in penance and Eucharist

- need help in formation of conscience
- begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience
- need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths
- use classes and categories to order actions around them
- can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others
- begin to order the religious world
- view rules as inflexible
- understand reality best in story form
- identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible
- identify with the stories of the Church (lives of saints for example)
- desire to learn about people and their differences
- accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people

FAITH DEVELOPMENT INTERMEDIATE - GRADES FOUR THROUGH SIX

Children

- continue to grow in their relationship with God through prayer
- view all events in their lives as part of faith
- understand symbols, stories, and religious images of God in a way that can be somewhat literal
- need help to develop their own unique God given gifts
- can take greater roles of responsibility in prayer and worship
- catch the tradition of the past through stories (scripture, Jesus, stories of the Church)

- can identify outstanding role models of the present
- begin to glimpse themselves in the future through observing the virtues and character of heroes and heroines and mature adults
- respond to lived faith witness by willingness to participate in: more systematic presentation of the faith, liturgy, and religious practices
- need help to see the reasons behind Church rules, privileges, and responsibilities
- need help to understand that God desires the good and happiness of everyone
- vest greater importance in their expanding world of school, community, people, and events around the world (the latter brought closer through media)
- can be introduced to care for the aged, persons with disabilities, the poor in the neighborhood and the world, through their expanded involvement with others outside the home
- gain a sense of responsibility and develop care for others by being involved in charitable collections, community clean ups, and other organized events
- begin to have a genuine sense of fairness and equality
- can take others' views into account in bargaining to meet their own needs
- grow in the ability to understand abstract qualities in the future such as justice and injustice by participating now in activities with sharp contrasts between good and evil

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PRESCHOOL

Catechists

- change activities frequently to accommodate short attention spans. Repeat short and simple songs, poems, and stories often for and with the children. Do not present abstract religious concepts since these are beyond the mental capabilities of the preschool child.
- be sensitive to children who cannot accomplish tasks requiring coordination. Praise attempts at the "process" rather than the "product."
- provide for individual attention to be given to each child. Have a small pupil-teacher ratio.
- promote trust and helpfulness, spontaneity and caring, mutual respect and a sense of wonder through your attitude. Help children develop an appreciation for the simple ordinary things in life; nurture a sense of reverence through informal prayers of praise and thanksgiving.
- employ a basic routine and use clear directions. Ensure a feeling of security within each child by keeping basically the same order of activities. Create an atmosphere where routine and acceptance are taken for granted - no matter how the children differ.
- allow children to experience your love and care for them as a way to know a loving God - religion is more "caught" than "taught." Help children to discover positive attributes of God through parents and a caring environment of Church.
- provide climate and experiences allowing children's self-worth to be raised: affirmation, acceptance, respect, freedom, activities allowing for success. Show sensitivity to children's feelings.
- allow opportunities for making choices as a basis for moral development; children need to make decisions. Provide the stable environment children need for emotional security by providing freedom within limits. Show patience toward children who do not want to participate in group activities. With patience and encouragement, children will eventually join in.
- encourage natural curiosity by providing many sensory experiences. Foster growth in appreciation of use of the senses in addition to the magnificence of all creation.

- help children discover their powers and capabilities as a way to appreciate themselves as unique and special.
- listen patiently to children's attempts to question and verbalize - do not rush through talking sessions.
- help children learn to experience, and thus cope, with many small group situations. Encourage but do not force sharing. Affirm children's friendliness and kindness as good. Encourage them to be thoughtful of others.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 3

Children

- gain control of large motor skills
- gain control of SOME fine motor skills, and over body processes (competency important to self image)
- need to stretch and move frequently
- increase use of hand skills for self care, eating, dressing, building and use of toys, simple household tasks
- alternate steps in climbing; begin to learn to jump

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 3

- need a strong parental influence
- need to be valued for who the individual is
- need freedom to achieve a measure of independence; ("I can do it myself")
- are sensitive to others' actions and feelings; are easily hurt themselves
- are just beginning to learn to share, but prefer solitary activities and "parallel" play with others
- like one-on-one interaction with adults, want to please and need recognition
- enjoy routines which bring feelings of stability and security
- like to pretend; will use puppets to initiate conversation
- can identify with things that make them feel happy, sad, angry, or frightened

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 3

- show marked growth in language
- make and understand pertinent comments
- speak in short sentences
- practice conversational skills, although conversations are often one-sided
- have limited attention spans (4-6 minutes)
- enjoy simple stories, want them to be retold with the same sequence and inflections
- may have difficulty in understanding directions and require one brief direction at a time
- need to see, hear, and touch lesson related objects and pictures
- learn by experiencing and imitating
- delight in discovering self and world
- develop imaginations
- love to pretend
- believe all inanimate objects have human traits

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 4

Children

- are refining motor skills; large skills are developed and in balance; are developing their small muscle control
- change activities frequently; are incapable of sitting still for any length of time unless highly motivated, attention span is limited
- are full of energy and action
- are improving their physical coordination
- have interest in manipulative materials
- are developing good sense of rhythm

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 4

- need strong parental influence
- are curious about surroundings-are eager to use senses to explore
- may begin to share with a friend; undergo a period of testing "my" world against peers/siblings
- are nearly self-dependent in a routine; however, vacillate between dependence and independence
- appreciate having individuality recognized

- need to feel welcomed and wanted by family and friends
- like making choices; may begin to see wisdom of rules
- crave companionship of peers
- need to know "what comes next"
- like group work and planned experiences, especially parties and celebrations

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL - AGE 4

- have a strong sense of wonder and awe about life
- have a strong desire to learn
- are eager for intellectual manipulation
- are becoming more acute in perceptual ability
- are imaginative and creative
- delight in long words
- delight in playful activity such as rhyming
- perceive analogies
- speak in sentences, but have limited linguistic expression of experience
- have fluent expression through play
- are able to tell name, address, and phone number
- are not always able to judge adequately for their own safety
- are animistic (all objects have feelings)
- are anthropomorphic (attribute human characteristics to inanimate objects and to God)
- are in symbolic stage of drawing
- understand and can explain pictures with special characteristics which are exaggerated - even if the results are not often recognized by adults

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

KINDERGARTEN

Catechists

- provide activities involving the whole child (note: in both gross and small motor skills, be sensitive to children who are developing more slowly, avoid frustration for the children). Balance your activities with quiet times and the opportunity for movement.
- give individual attention to children by using their names in a special way. Celebrate birthdays, baptism, and anniversaries. Give praise for accomplishments. Plan social activities and celebrations which revolve around the changing seasons, and the liturgical seasons and feasts in the Church year, which may be inclusive of other family members.
- build on childrens' desire to please others as a first step in deepening a sense of selflessness and concern for others.
- assist children in developing a sense of responsibility and service to others by rotating simple chores. Role play different jobs both in the home and in the community.
- allow the children to make decisions as a basis for developing a social conscience.
- use symbols to enhance learning such as bread, water, light, heart.
- provide brief periods of silence to allow children to focus and internalize what has been learned.
- review and repeat as necessary. Present the same theme in different ways, using different materials or activities - retelling of stories, especially those from the Bible, is a good example.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

KINDERGARTEN - AGE 5

Children

- are physically active, but have less energy than three and four year olds

- are more mature in motor control; hop, skip, are more balanced and poised
- participate in boisterous play
- build with blocks, have continued interest in puzzles
- have greater small muscle control in hands, enabling them to draw, cut
- usually have defined hand preference
- have increased competence in self-care
- are capable of sitting still for longer periods of time (10-15 minutes)

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

KINDERGARTEN - AGE 5

- are strongly influenced by adults and identify with them
- are moving into a larger circle beyond family
- need continuing signs of affection, belonging, encouragement and praise
- like to do what others do; however, dislike being compared to other children, and may be damaged by this
- finish self-initiated tasks and take pride in work; are self motivated and self-sufficient
- are friendly and outgoing; have a good sense of humor, like jokes and tricks
- learn to play in small groups, but still may have difficulty sharing
- need freedom in choosing friends; are expanding their social contact to those outside of family
- develop a social relationship between self and teacher; like to role-play adult situations

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

KINDERGARTEN - AGE 5

- are curious and eager to learn
- learn best through active involvement
- explore world symbols through the sensory mode
- begin to distinguish reality from fantasy
- can symbolize thoughts through drawings
- may enter the "representative" stage of art - expressing their experiences more realistically.
- have longer attention spans (10-15 minutes)
- can remember and carry out two or three instructions with gradual development of listening skills

- talk without infantile articulation
- can narrate a long tale
- are eager to listen to stories and then retell them in own words
- may talk incessantly
- enjoy activities that allow an exchange of ideas among children
- can focus on detail and begin also to see things as a whole
- do not consider all the evidence in making judgements but will focus on one aspect

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PRIMARY (GRADES 1-3)

Catechists

- emphasize uniqueness and the people God has given to us who love and care for us.
- concretize experiences by the use of stories, music, spontaneous prayer, and the use of imagination in class reflections.
- be an example for your children. Teach the children that God loves them, by showing them by attitude and action that they are loved.
- praise, reward, and appreciate the children. Enhance the childrens' self-image by your attitude toward each child.
- stimulate thought by including a variety of methods and activities. Distribute responsibility throughout the group which will enable the children to develop self control.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FIRST GRADE

Catechists

- help children begin to acquire basic spiritual attitudes through the expression of gestures, since children relate readily to the language of symbols and gestures. Provide frequent opportunities for them to engage in ritual: i.e. processions, offerings, praising, and thanking God in prayer and song.
- help the children move from a moral stage known as self-interest. Endeavor to awaken in them an awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Invite them to reach out to others in love and concern.
- help children acquire an image of God through the stories you read and tell. Images later become more mature concepts and feelings about God. Emphasize the love and providence of God and God's faithfulness by using scripture stories.
- provide example since the children tend to imitate people - one who is conscious of God's presence in the world, in her or his life, one who is joyful, one who is ever striving to follow Christ more closely.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 1

Children

- tire easily physically (and intellectually)
- have short attention spans
- are very active
- prefer play over work

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 1

- are centered on "self"; need help in developing relationships; seek to identify self as unique individuals in family, school, and world
- use "me" a great deal, want desires fulfilled in a short time; only beginning to understand the concept of "our".

- need boundaries of respect and responsibility set, need to be encouraged to share
- grow by identifying with adults who must "model" for child
- exhibit curiosity and enthusiasm
- open and eager to tell about family; need sensitivity to family situations
- may have developed social skills because of preschool environment
- may give "windows to what is within them" through their drawings
- boys and girls may prefer to sit, work, play in separate groups

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 1

- can usually think logically about concrete, real objects or personal experience
- learn best by doing, showing, and experiencing
- exhibit difficulty in reversing their thought processes in order to give the reasons that may have led up to a conclusion
- have an excellent facility for memorizing, especially musical or rhyming refrains

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SECOND GRADE

Catechists

- need to bear in mind children's tendency to confuse past and present experiences because they are still limited in their sense of history and time. Clarify the differences - clarification is especially significant when introducing them to the examination of conscience. Need to assist children in sorting out what is real and relevant to the current examination of conscience, because they generally live in the present.
- show children love in action and attitude, consistently building them up with praise, recognition, and appreciation for the children to understand their personal value.
- help children form their consciences. Need to be careful to react consistently to an action, incident, or situation. (The children will realize that there are differences between what is dangerous, what is improper, what is annoying, what is accidental, and what is sinful).
- help to prepare the children to understand the forgiveness of God. Concentrate on the reality of God's love and mercy as a tremendous gift which God gives to us. Begin to develop a sense of sin and wrong doing.
- set an example for the formation of the children's values through their personal relationship with God, desire for union with God in prayer, and appreciation of the sacraments manifested through frequent reception.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 2

Children

- begin to master "things"
- develop "control" of language
- develop body skills
- become orderly

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 2

- begin to develop real social awareness, but are still somewhat centered on "self"
- begin to develop sense of "community"; accept responsibility to do their part in classroom and home tasks, if assigned according to ability; realize that each person's task is important to the group
- can experience adults outside of family as important "bridges" to move into the world
- find it difficult to accept decisions of group when different from one's own
- can begin to dialogue in small group discussions as opposed to just responding one-on-one to teacher directed questions
- are upset by negative comments, especially from someone in authority
- exhibit curiosity and enthusiasm for life
- boys and girls may prefer to sit/work in separate groups

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 2

- able to think logically about concrete, real objects or experiences they have known for the most part
- learn best by doing, showing, and experiencing
- are not ready for interpersonal dialogue
- have difficulty seeing things through another person's point of view
- tend to have their perceptions dominated by their own viewpoints
- begin to generalize
- set standards which are often too high for themselves (which lead to disappointment if the activity proves too difficult)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THIRD GRADE

Catechists

- model Christian behavior for children to emulate because third-graders are in the "hero-worshipping" stage. Utilize stories from scripture and from the lives of the saints which include both heroes and heroines.
- help children develop socially and become more aware of the effect they have on a group. Help the children to choose the good that God wills, reject the wrong, and begin to accept greater responsibility for their actions.
- help children to become aware of social ills and human needs resulting from injustice, greed, lack of mercy, violence, and war. Teach them as Christians to use their God-given gifts to respond to the needs of others.
- assume responsibility for involving the children in prayer and in Christian service. Provide example as well as instruction that will encourage the children in a life of prayer and service.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 3

Children

- have greater control of large motor activities and increased mastery of fine motor skills
- enjoy group activities because of improved body coordination

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 3

- are in an age of "I" and "you"
- have increased awareness of social sense; may begin to feel pre-adolescent pressure to wear the right clothes, etc.
- are more ready to share than at an earlier age, sometimes even caring for younger children

- begin to place great emphasis on friendships (best friends begin to develop); best friends may be good dialogue partners in group discussions
- can cooperate in group experiences (with about 4 or 5 others); boys and girls may work best in separate groups; do not want to be criticized or embarrassed in front of the group
- grow into making observations about the world around them, and exercise curiosity for life
- can begin to take responsibility for planning - ex. prayer service

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 3

- can do more logical thinking with concrete objects and events in the present
- begin to be able to see things from another's point of view, though not consistently
- are rapidly developing communication skills
- have speaking vocabularies which exceed reading vocabularies
- have an increasing ability to talk with others and not simply to them
- are enthusiastic
- are developing the self-confidence needed to work on projects
- are at peak creativity
- are interested in learning games
- begin to be "data" collectors
- display curiosity about life, nature, and people, but are able to learn more readily from their observations
- are mastering the ability to read and enjoy using this skill

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Catechist

- provide reasonable explanations and increased group activities because the children have developed a longer attention span. Augment the docility and the unquestioning acceptance of adult explanations by capitalizing on the children's interest in sharing in small group discussions.
- foster opportunities to replace interest in fantasy and fairy tale by interest in true-to-life stories that originate in the life of the Church, in their own communities and cultures, as well as in other areas.
- provide group projects in which all the children can be involved because children learn most effectively when engaged in the learning process.
- encourage students to analyze facts and to explore the lived faith of believers, past and present, whose lives they can emulate.
- continue to offer opportunities for meaningful memorization, particularly of certain essential doctrinal statements.
- use daily situations and discussions to help students develop skills in moral decision making. Challenge the students to correlate what they say they believe with their actions.
- include the element of social awareness in prayer experiences and reconciliation services. Move away from a simplified following of the rules and help the children to progress toward a faithful response to a call from the Lord.
- present Jesus as a model and friend. Identify biblical personalities, saints, and people in our own day who are living as Jesus did and who also serve as role models.
- explore more fully doctrines of the creed, commandments, and sacraments. Emphasize the meaning behind law and ritual. Provide explanations that represent the effectiveness of Christ at work in the world today.
- provide guidance and direction.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOURTH GRADE

Catechists

- stimulate the children's creativity through music, art, drama, and related activities. Provide an opportunity for them to express and appreciate religious concepts.
- encourage children to do what is right because it is right, whether it pleases the group or not. Stress the reasons and the values underlying the rules, as well as the importance of right motives.
- make children aware of social ills and human need by helping them to become involved in social justice activities in various ways - e.g. recycling bottles and aluminum, learning not to waste natural resources. Teach that all are called to give of their time, talents, and earthly goods.
- provide opportunities for fourth graders to seek and enjoy short periods of time when they can be alone. Support and nurture this desire and lead the children to prayer by teaching them how to pray and by praying with them: i.e. communal prayer, rote prayers, silent or centering prayer, spontaneous prayer and petitions, meditative prayer, paraliturgies, and prayer services.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 4

Children

- show an improvement in athletic skills; have greater control
- experience a plateau of sorts in physical development
- begin to notice differences between boys and girls

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 4

- become group age "joiners," enjoy team effort
- are full of enthusiasm; have a great sense of humor
- place more importance on conformity rather than individuality; need to belong to the "right" crowd; begin to be influenced by the teen culture
- may experience an increased status with peers and a decrease in dependence on adults (grow beyond the influence of family and friends; however, still need adults for "direction" and approval)
- work cooperatively and evaluate selves in relationship to peers; desire to choose their own play/work partners; like to work on group projects; are self-confident

- begin to be aware of the opposite sex (display giggling over uncertainty of how to handle these feelings)
- **boys** join groups of boys and do not expect or experience difficulties
- **girls** are much more tentative with other girls; exercise a definite ritual of assimilation into the group (catechists need to pay attention to those who do not fit in and encourage acceptance)
- are conscious of the world around them

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 4

- enjoy intellectual challenges and are beginning to be able to think abstractly
- have a longer attention span and are capable of hard work
- are developing a sense of time
- see the concrete, real world as more important than the imaginative world
- are curious and thirst for knowledge and stimulation
- like to collect and classify things and exercise ability to question and experiment
- grow in reasoning ability and are more able to make moral decisions

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FIFTH GRADE

Catechists

- accept pre-adolescent restlessness, boredom, and awkwardness as a way to help students experience God's love for them as individuals. Repeat the message of self-worth again and again.
- understand that as peer pressure is a reality and pre-adolescents fear peer rejection, liturgical/sacramental experience rooted in the group is appealing and that community is an inviting concept. Encourage students to participate fully as a group in preparing materials and place for celebrations, playing musical instruments, reading the scripture, dramatizing the Gospel story, carrying the presentation gifts, making decorations, and presenting commentaries.
- encourage the understanding of God as a partner, someone to whom they can talk, someone who affects them personally, someone with whom they can enjoy periods of silence and reflection. Establish a positive attitude toward prayer and its purposes. Offer a variety of prayer experiences: rote prayers, silent or centering prayers, spontaneous prayers and petitions, meditative prayer, paraliturgies, and prayer services.
- educate students in attitudes and behaviors in the cause of peace and justice. Focus on three current areas of concern: world peace, world hunger, and the rights of the oppressed.

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 5

Children

- are unpredictable; are a cause of irritation to themselves and others; worry about body development
- see body as an embarrassing object because of the vast differences in rate of change among this age group

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 5

- are strongly influenced by the group; need to be like peers
- are in a transition time between adolescence and the peaceful years of middle childhood; are unpredictable, having both spurts of high and low energy at the same time

- may act/dress older than their age; need help to cultivate virtues like modesty and consideration for others
- are developing close friendships
- need help to identify feelings and how to act upon them in a positive manner - (giggling covers up emotions regarding the opposite sex)
- like quiet time (ex. reading) and time with peers (ex. playing complex games)
- do not want to risk being laughed at; may avoid answering orally in a large group; enjoy small group discussions better; prefer recording and reporting back to the large group
- are influenced by media and advertisements; are attracted to and value whatever enables them to experience physical/mental control over their environment
- are idealistic; are beginning to ask questions about themselves and their lives; are aware of problems in their families and world
- have feelings close to the surface; worry about looks, self, family, almost all think they are different; experience self-consciousness and sensitivity to criticism

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 5

- think on a factual/concrete level
- are able gradually to form abstract ideas/concepts based on experience
- manifest intense curiosity, a thirst for new experiences and a desire to collect, organize, and correlate factual material
- enjoy making collections of all kinds
- tend to see details more clearly than the main idea
- are able to observe people, situations and form conclusions about them
- search for explanations and are beginning to work with universals
- can memorize details but should always have this coupled with understanding
- have attention spans that usually exceed 20 minutes
- like to read, can participate in activities with complicated rules, can think chronologically, enjoy being silly, and delight in playing with the double meaning in language

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SIXTH GRADE

Catechists

- realize the fact that sixth graders are more aware of social problems, that they indeed have a strong sense of social justice, which results in their willingness to help others, even at some risk or actual cost to themselves. Lead students in the study of the scriptural history of God's identity with the oppressed and his action to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
- provide a safe and secure setting for exploring questions and doubts. Provide a forum for students to explore their feelings, as they try to integrate the reality of their life experience with their religious beliefs.
- teach young people to pray, keeping in mind that learning to pray is more important than learning prayers. Provide opportunities so that the boys and girls unite themselves to God with spontaneity and joy. Encourage silent prayer, for example, after the narration of a Gospel passage or at unforeseen moments created by nature or by the interaction of the children.

Note: (some school districts now include sixth grade in middle school).

PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 6

Children

- are in a transitional stage of physical maturation
- experience unevenness in every level; e.g., have propensity to be energetic and active at one time, extremely fatigued shortly afterwards
- vacillate between high and low moods (physical and/or emotional)
- can experience the onslaught of puberty

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 6

- regard the influence of parent/teacher as weaker than that of peers
- continue to be in transition between adolescence and middle childhood, often feel like they do not belong (between elementary and middle or junior high)
- need to accept themselves as male or female and to deal with others on those terms; have a growing interest in clothes, although not necessarily how to care for them!

- can experience negative conditioning and ignorance as primary problems in psychological development
- continue to develop close friendships
- are developing self-image; allow self-worth to be prominently influenced by peer groups
- need significant adults for guidance/support to enable them to make wise decisions about real issues; begin to develop ideas about life's work
- dislike being embarrassed or criticized in front of friends, especially by parents; need caring groups (family, friends) for belonging
- experience confusion, curiosity, uncertainty, and experimentation in behavior which tends to accompany their search for personal identity
- enjoy examining their roots and stories of their families and groups to which they belong as they search for their identity

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

GRADE 6

- can use their minds to a greater degree
- tend to be very intellectual; are preoccupied with facts, reasons, and discovery through experimentation
- can work effectively with universal and deductive reasoning in arriving at conclusions
- may still need grounding in concrete objects and situations when dealing with abstract ideas
- continue to see details more clearly than main ideas
- prefer working with the concrete rather than the abstract

CCD GUIDELINES

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The present day represents the age of inclusion for persons with disabilities. Most children with disabilities who come to a parish religious education program will already be in an inclusive education program in their public school. They are learning side by side with their typical peers.

When children with disabilities are in a parish religious education program, they are to be in a regular classroom with support. The key to successful inclusion is support. Special children learn their faith side by side with their typical peers of the same chronological age. Even if a child has mental retardation, he or she is not to be placed with children younger than himself/herself. This type of placement does not respect the dignity of the human person.

Children learn best when they learn together. When children with disabilities are with their typical peers, it is often the typical child who benefits the most. Typical children have the opportunity to grow in understanding, acceptance, and compassion when they grow together with special children. All of this interaction is a healthy preparation for adult life.

The Department for Persons with Disabilities is available to assist a parish whenever a child with a disability is enrolled in the religious education program. The staff of the department will assist in training the catechists and/or volunteers who wish to work with students who have disabilities.

TEACHING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: SOME IMPLICATIONS

This fact sheet is for:

- catechists whose pupils now include children with disabilities
- special education teachers who are experienced with one kind of disability but wish to know something about others
- administrators and supervisors who want to know more about directing the catechesis of all children, including children with disabilities.

Dealing with a child who has disabilities is dealing first with a child. All children learn differently, and the catechist's challenge comes in recognizing and adjusting to the individual. Thus, the ideas that follow are simply suggestions, which catechists are to accept, reject or modify to match the needs and characteristics of individual children.

In general, when a student with a disability enters a regular class:

1. Obtain background information prior to the student's enrolling in your class, if possible. You will find pertinent information about teaching children with the same type of disability in journals, books, and magazines.

2. Elicit assistance from resource room teachers, therapists, and other professionals involved in the care of the child.
3. Ask the student and parents or guardians about special provisions or adaptations that may help the student.
4. Encourage the student to be as independent as possible. It may require effort on your part to keep from helping the student with a difficult task. If it is within the student's ability, encourage but don't intrude.
5. Discuss the nature of the disability with the other students when appropriate. Your attitude toward the student with a disability will determine largely how the class responds. Emphasize that all students are more alike than different.

When working with a student who has mild retardation:

1. Set realistic goals for the student, keeping environment and abilities in mind.
2. Carefully sequence learning activities, from easy ones to difficult ones.
3. Use concrete concepts and simple phrases in your explanations.
4. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who has a severe disability:

1. Work closely with parents to choose goals, teaching methods and evaluation strategies. Try to keep home and school programs consistent.
2. Use materials, reinforcers, and methods that are chronologically and physically age appropriate.
3. Emphasize repetition and provide opportunities for using the skill once it has been learned.
4. Promote skill generalization; teach the same skill in diverse settings.
5. Provide as many opportunities for interaction with typical peers as possible.
6. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who has a learning disability:

1. Use highly structured methods. Tell the student exactly what is expected.
2. Understand that a learning disability may cause inconsistent performance.
3. If the child has a receptive language problem, use short sentences and simple vocabulary at first.
4. Allow students who have difficulty with written language to use tape recorders or the reproduced notes of fellow students.
5. Use self-correcting materials for immediate feedback without embarrassment.
6. Provide ample opportunities for drill and practice.
7. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who has emotional or clinical problems:

1. Provide adequate structure in the learning environment. Let the student know what is expected, but also indicate where there may be some flexibility.
2. Reinforce appropriate behavior; ignore inappropriate behavior. Model and explain what constitutes appropriate behavior.
3. Expect improvement on a long term basis. Understand that small gains may take time to become permanent.
4. Be sensitive to individual differences. Try to create an atmosphere in which students are respected and learn to respect others.
5. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who has visual problems:

1. Before the school year begins, acquaint the student with the classroom and the building.
2. Teach other students the sighted guide technique or other ways to help without sacrificing the student's independence.
3. Keep background noise to a minimum.
4. Speak in a normal tone of voice.
5. Encourage the student to use a tape recorder or other special equipment in class.
6. Note that most religious ed materials can be adapted to braille if this is what the student uses.

7. Set an example for the other students in the class by describing the things you see and relating them to their sounds.
8. Give the student ample opportunity and assistance to structure personal space.
9. Find out how much residual vision the student has and make sure that lighting is appropriate.
10. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who has a physical disability or other health impairment:

1. Ask the student about aids and adaptations he or she may use.
2. Find out from parents or therapists what physical or medical limitations the child has, if any.
3. Don't do unnecessary things for the student. If he or she appears to want help, ask first.
4. Encourage the student to participate as much as possible in the regular class routine.
5. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.

When working with a student who is deaf or has hearing impairments:

1. Before the catechetical year begins, acquaint the student with the classroom and the building.
2. Seat the student where he or she can see your lips clearly.
3. Don't speak with your back to the class or with a bright light behind you. Don't inadvertently cover your mouth when you speak. Try not to pace or walk around as you speak to the class.
4. Body language and gestures help students with hearing impairments understand the message.
5. Speak in a normal tone of voice.
6. Become familiar with hearing aids or any other special equipment the student may use.

7. Write assignments and directions on the board or on handouts. Have a hearing student take notes for a student with hearing impairments.
8. If the student uses the services of an interpreter, do not talk to the interpreter. Rather, talk directly to the student. The interpreter will translate what you say; there is no need to funnel requests or questions through the interpreter.
9. After a lesson, clarify any problems the student may have.
For more specific information, write for fact sheets on specific disabilities.

Department for Persons with Disabilities
Diocese of Pittsburgh
135 First Avenue, First Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412 456-3119

ATTITUDES

Teacher Attitudes and Expectations

Your attitudes toward students with disabilities set the tone of the classroom and shape the interactions among students. One important aspect of attitude is expectation. Research findings have repeatedly emphasized the influence of teacher expectation on student performance. If teachers expect students to have behavior problems, students may very well fulfill this expectation.

Labels may affect expectations. Frequently, labels introduce a set of preconceived characteristics (stereotypes) causing a teacher who is assigned a class including a student with a disability to envision a specific behavior pattern before even meeting the student. You should be aware of your own attitudes and expectations and should ascribe to labels no greater import than the information they provide about how the student learns and what the student needs.

Student Attitudes

Placing students with disabilities into the "mainstream," or regular class, does not guarantee that they will be liked, accepted, or chosen as friends by their peers. Without careful attention by sensitive catechists, such a placement could even be a harmful experience.

You will find that working closely in advance with the parents, the student, and the resource or special class teacher, may be instrumental in preparing the student with disabilities for regular classroom experiences.

To prepare the class for the entry of a student with disabilities, focus on student similarities rather than differences. Deal forthrightly and comfortably with students' questions, letting them know it is all right to discuss disabilities. Two other approaches can promote positive

relationships among students: encourage cooperative learning tasks and establish ways for students to help each other.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

In small groups, students work together on tasks that encompass all the students' abilities. Cooperative learning is the opposite of competition, which may not be fair to all students with disabilities. To teach cooperation, the catechist must be ready to help by:

1. Giving the student with the disability a structured role in the group.
2. Showing that each member of the group has different skills.
3. Emphasizing that the best work will need everyone's contribution.
4. Teaching typical students and students with disabilities how to cooperate.
5. Adapting the tasks so that the student with a disability can succeed. This may mean giving group members different tasks, and varying the amount of work each member receives, or using improvement rather than performance as a measure of success.

PEER TUTORING

Another way to promote acceptance among students is to encourage them to help each other. They do it all the time, informally. Given a little training, students can learn how to teach and encourage their peers, and in the process they can improve their understanding of the subject and of themselves.

Students with disabilities do not always need to be on the receiving end. Their strengths can be used to help their classmates, and they can develop confidence in so doing. Students have great gifts of faith to share with their classmates.

Peer teaching will not work without some guidance from catechists. In regular sessions with the tutors, catechists can demonstrate methods of instruction and answer specific questions, especially about the tutor's feelings.

One unexpected benefit of the peer teaching approach is the effect it may have on the rest of the students. Students may begin to look out for their new friend in other situations outside the classroom. As students see their classmates assuming the tutor role, they may become interested as well, and associating with students who have disabilities may take on greater status. Above all, some real contact is being made between students who might otherwise never have gotten to know each other.

ORGANIZING THE ENVIRONMENT

THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

Catechists organize the learning environment all the time, consciously or unconsciously. There are some very simple steps a catechist can take to maintain order. For example, desks can be grouped in ways that encourage or discourage interaction among students, and learning centers can be set up to structure independent work or provide for small group instruction. Areas for rewards and punishment (time-out space) can also be designated.

Students with special needs may need special equipment. For example, young children with physical problems may need to use a prone board while doing fine motor tasks, because positioning in a certain way gives them the greatest control over their movements. Therapists will advise you about these kinds of special needs, but incorporating the special equipment into the classroom routine will be of help.

Seating considerations are another important aspect of physically structuring the class. Children with hearing impairments who rely on lip-reading skills will naturally need seating that gives them a clear view of the catechist or other speaker with adequate lighting on the speaker's face. Children who are easily distracted may be best placed near quiet self-directed classmates, rather than beside other children who are easily distracted. Students with visual impairments should be situated so that it is easy for them to find their seats and equipment (braille writers, low vision aids, or other aids).

SUMMARY

Adequate support, the catechist's own attitudes, and a willingness to learn about specific disabilities are all facets of successful inclusion. In addition to structuring the physical environment, success will also be fostered by a well defined plan of classroom management. Such a plan should include carefully reasoned steps and consequences for discipline, reinforcement for positive behavior, and strategies for helping a student cope with failures. Verbalizing the mental process while using specific skills and strategies and helping students to develop learning strategies that include self-encouragement and self-monitoring can also assist students with special needs in the learning process. Being attentive to the needs of individual students does require extra planning, patience, and great energy. As a catechist comes to better know the needs of each student, he or she will become not only a better catechist of students with disabilities but a better catechist for all students.

APPENDIX I

Students should be familiar with the following prayers

The Sign of the Cross Mt. 28:19

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

TTOC pp. 152, 344, 508
CCC p. 62, #233

Simple Prayers

Jesus, I love You.
Thank You, God.
God how great You are.

TTOC pp. 336-337, 344
CCC #2637-2639

Our Father Mt. 6:9-13

Our Father,
Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Amen

TTOC pp. 344, 357-358, 507
CCC #2759, 2761, 2777-2865

Hail Mary Lk. 1:28,42

Hail Mary,
full of grace! the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Amen

TTOC pp. 344, 508
CCC #2676-2677

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to

the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen

TTOC pp. 344, 508
CCC #2628

Glory to the Father

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen

TTOC p. 344
CCC #2628

A Morning Prayer

God, our Father, I offer you today all that I think and do and say. I offer it with what was done on earth by Jesus Christ, Your Son.

Amen

TTOC p. 356
CCC #2698

Prayer Before Meals Jn. 6:11

Acts 27:35 (The Lord prayed at meals)
Bless us, O Lord, and these Your gifts which we are about to receive from Your goodness, through Christ our Lord.

Amen

TTOC p. 512
CCC #2698

Prayer After Meals

We give You thanks, almighty God, for all Your goodness. You live and reign now and forever.

Amen

TTOC p. 512
CCC #2698

Acts of Contrition

Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.

TTOC pp. 344, 426
CCC #1451

Responses to Prayers at Mass

Refer to Parish Worship Guide (Missalette)

Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen

TTOC pp. 344, 510
CCC pp. 49 & 50

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried.

On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen

TTOC p. 356
CCC pp. 49 & 50

The Rosary

The Rosary is a meditative prayer. It consists of a series of beads on which we pray traditional prayers such as the Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be while we think about special events in the life of Jesus and Mary.

Begin praying the rosary with the cross. Pray the Sign of the Cross and the Apostle's Creed. On the first bead pray one Our Father, on the next three beads a Hail Mary each and on the following bead one Glory Be to the Father.

Begin the first decade with the medal, say one Our Father and then ten Hail Marys on the row of beads following it. After the decade pray one Glory Be to the Father. Continue the remaining decades with an Our Father on each single bead and ten Hail Marys on each row of beads.

Conclude each decade with a Glory Be to the Father.

As you pray each decade, think of one of the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, or Glorious Mysteries, or a special event in the life of Jesus and Mary.

The Five Joyful Mysteries

(Monday & Saturday)

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Jesus
4. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

The Five Luminous Mysteries

(Thursday)

1. Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan
2. Jesus' Self-manifestation at the Wedding of Cana
3. Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of Eucharist

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries

(Tuesday & Friday)

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death

The Five Glorious Mysteries

(Wednesday & Sunday)

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles
4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
5. The Crowning of Mary in Heaven

TTOC pp. 344, 509

CCC #2708

Pray the Hail Holy Queen prayer to finish the Rosary.

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

TTOC pp. 509-510
CCC #2677

Prayer for the Faithful Departed

Eternal Rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

Amen

TTOC p. 513
CCC #958

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Your Love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, Who does instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Holy Spirit, a love and relish of what is right and just, and a constant enjoyment of His comforts. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

TTOC p. 516
CCC #2671

The Way of the Cross (Stations)

The Way of the Cross commemorates the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is condemned to die.
2. Jesus takes up His cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets His Mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry His cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who mourn for Him.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Amen

TTOC p. 352
CCC #2669

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because You have revealed them. In this faith I desire to live and die.

Amen

Act of Hope

O my God, trusting in Your promises and the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, I hope for the pardon of my sins and the graces I need to serve You faithfully on earth, and to obtain eternal life in heaven.

Amen

Act of Love

O my God, I love You above all things with my whole heart and soul, because You are infinitely good and deserving of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for love of You.

Amen

TTOC pp. 344, 510-511

CCC #2656-2658

Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant, and from this day all generations will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me; holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.

Amen

TTOC p. 514

CCC #2619

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where
there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt,
faith; where there is

despair, hope; where there is there is darkness,
light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine
Master, grant that I may not seek so much to be

consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen

CCC #2683, 2684, 2692

Reference for the whole section CCC #2688

APPENDIX II

Students should be familiar with the following concepts

The Ten Commandments

The following or similar language is appropriate for first penance preparation (Grade 2)

1. Love God more than all things.
2. Say God's name with love.
3. Keep Sunday holy.
4. Honor your parents.
5. Take care of all living things.
6. Show respect for yourself and others.
7. Do not steal.
8. Tell the truth.
9. Do not be jealous.
10. Do not be greedy.

Traditional Catechetical Formula (Grades 4-8)

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Based on Ex. 20:2-17 and Dt. 5:6-21
TTOC p. 247, CCC p. 496 & 497

The Great Commandments

(Grades 2-8)

1. You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul and with your whole mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27

TTOC p. 248, CCC #2055

The Beatitudes

(Grades 4-8)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3-10
TTOC p.328
CCC #1716

The Seven Sacraments

(Grades 2-8)

Baptism
Confirmation
Eucharist
Penance
Anointing of the Sick
Holy Orders
Matrimony

TTOC pp. 354, 362-363
CCC #1210

Twelve Apostles

(Grades 3-8)

Peter James
Andrew Thaddeus
James Thomas
John Matthew
Philip Simon
Bartholomew

Matthias (replaced Judas Iscariot)

Matthew 10:2-4
Acts 1:21-26
TTOC p. 168
CCC #858

The Cardinal Virtues

(Grades 5-8)

Prudence
Justice
Fortitude

Temperance

Wisdom 8:7
TTOC p.327
CCC #1805

The Theological Virtues

(Grades 5-8)

Faith
Hope
Charity

1 Cor. 13:13
TTOC pp. 251, 254, 327
CCC #1813

The Works of Mercy

(Grades 5-8)

Corporal

Feed the hungry.
Shelter the homeless.
Clothe the naked.
Visit the sick and imprisoned.
Bury the dead.

Matthew 25:35-40
CCC #2447

Spiritual

Instruct the ignorant.
Advise the doubtful.
Correct the sinner.
Comfort the afflicted.
Forgive offenses.
Bear wrongs patiently.
Pray for the living and the dead.

Gal 6:1-2
1 Thes. 5:14-19
CCC #2447

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

(Grades 7-8)

wisdom knowledge
understanding reverence
courage wonder and awe
right judgement

Is. 11:1-3
TTOC pp. 142, 328
CCC #1831

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

(Grades 7-8)

love generosity
joy gentleness
peace faithfulness
patience modesty
kindness self-control
goodness chastity

Gal. 5:22-23
TTOC p. 328
CCC #1832

Marks of the Church

(Grades 3-8)

One Catholic
Holy Apostolic

TTOC p.165
CCC #865

Eucharistic Fast

(Grades 2-8)

General Law - Those preparing to receive
Communion must abstain from all

food and drink for one hour prior to reception.

Exceptions to the Eucharistic Fast - Water
may be taken any time before Communion.

In the case of sickness, medicine may be taken
any time before reception.

Canon 919
TTOC p. 377

Holy Days of Obligation in the United States

(Grades 2-8)

1. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
(January 1)*
2. Solemnity of the Ascension (Forty days
after Easter)
3. Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed
Virgin Mary (August 15)*
4. Solemnity of All Saints (November 1)*
5. Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
(December 8)
6. Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus
Christ (December 25)

❖ When these days fall on a Saturday or a
Monday, they are not observed as holy
days of obligation. They do keep their
major rank as solemnities and should
always be celebrated with special care.

Canon 1246
NCCB, December 1991
TTOC p. 196
CCC #2177

The Laws of the Church

Traditionally called the Precepts of the Church (Grades 4-8)

1. Celebrate Christ's resurrection every Sunday and holy day of obligation.
 - Take part in Mass.
 - Avoid unnecessary work and unnecessary shopping
2. Lead a sacramental life. Receive Holy Communion frequently and the sacrament of penance regularly.
 - Receive Holy Communion at least once a year, in connection with the Easter Season, between the First Sunday of lent and Trinity Sunday.
 - Receive the sacrament of penance at least once a year (annual confession is an obligation only if serious sin is involved).
3. Study Catholic teaching throughout life, especially in preparing for the sacraments.
4. Observe the marriage laws of the Catholic Church.
 - Give religious training to one's children (by example and word).
 - Use parish schools and religious education programs.
5. Strengthen and support the Church.
 - Support one's own parish community and parish priests.

- Support the worldwide Church.
 - Support the Holy Father.
6. Do penance, including not eating meat and fasting from food on appointed days.
 7. Join in the missionary work of the Church.

Basic Teachings NCCB, p.28;
TTOC pp.195-196; CCC #2041-2043

Days of Penance

(Grades 5-8)

All Fridays
Days of Lent

Canon 1250
TTOC pp. 404-405
CCC #1438

General Laws of Fast and Abstinence

(Grades 5-8)

Fast: All adults, 18 up to the beginning of their sixtieth (59) year, are bound by the law of fasting. Fasting allows one full meal, but a light breakfast and lunch are not forbidden. Pastors and parents are to see to it that children while not bound to the law of fast and abstinence are educated and introduced to an authentic sense of penance.

Abstinence: All persons 14 years and older are bound by the law of abstinence. Abstinence means not eating meat.

Days of Fast and Abstinence:

Ash Wednesday
Good Friday
Fridays of Lent (abstinence)

On Fridays, when abstinence is not required by law, acts of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety are suggested. Abstinence from meat is especially recommended but under no obligation by law.

Canons 1251-1253

TTOC p.405

CCC #1434, 2043

APPENDIX III

Students should be familiar with the following saints and contemporary models of faith.

Angels

Personal and spiritual beings created by God, who know and praise him and share God's life.

They possess both intelligence and will. They are servants and messengers of God. Guardian Angels watch over and guide each human person as agents of God's love.

TTOC p. 87
CCC #328, 329, 336

Saints

Persons who responded to the call to holiness and chose to follow Jesus faithfully.

We celebrate and honor our patron saints, parish/school saint(s) and the feast days of special saints.

TTOC pp. 339, 468
CCC #956, 957, 2030, 2156

Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church

Immaculate Conception (Title of Mary - Patroness of the United States)

Our Lady of Guadalupe (Title of Mary - Patroness of the Americas)

St. Joseph

All Saints

All Souls

St. Charles Lwanga and Companions

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

St. Frances Cabrini

St. Francis of Assisi

St. Isaac Jogues, St. John de Brebeuf and Companions

St. John Neumann

Bl. Katharine Drexel

St. Martin de Porres

St. Maximilian Kolbe

Saints Peter and Paul

St. Therese of the Child Jesus

St. Vincent de Paul

Bl. Damien of Molokai

Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha

Contemporary Models of Faith

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Pope John Paul II

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Dorothy Day

CCC #2030

A Resource Regarding the Saints

The Liturgy of the Hours, Catholic Book Publishing Company, New York, 1975.

Older students might be enriched by contact with the following local treasures.

Highlights in the Diocese of Pittsburgh

A visit to St. Paul Cathedral, 108 N. Dithridge Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 (412) 621-4951

A visit to the relic collection and Stations of the Cross at St. Anthony Chapel, Troy Hill.

A visit to diocesan archival displays for special events at Synod Hall, 125 N. Craig Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, (412) 621-6217

A visit to St. Paul Seminary, 2900 Noblestown Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, (412) 921-5800.

An Historic Church Building in Each Deanery

Allegheny Valley Deanery

St. Mary Church, Sharpsburg – 1917
(St. Mary Assumption, Glenshaw – 1840)

Beaver County Deanery

St. Cecilia Church, Rochester – 1837
(SS. Peter & Paul, Beaver – 1830, Oldest Parish)

Butler County Deanery

St. Peter Church, Butler – 1821

Central Deanery

St. Paul Cathedral, Oakland – 1834

East Suburban Deanery

St. James Church, Wilkinsburg – 1869
St. Joseph, Verona – 1866, Oldest Parish

Greene County Deanery

St. Ann Church, Waynesburg – 1839

Lawrence County Deanery

St. Agatha Church, Ellwood City – 1895
(St. James the Apostle, New Bedford – 1845, Oldest Parish)

Mon Yough Deanery

St. Mary Czestochowa Church, McKeesport – 1893

North Side Deanery

St. Peter Church, North Side 1871
(Most Holy Name of Jesus, Troy Hill – 1868, Oldest Parish)

Northwest Deanery

St. Alphonsus Church, Wexford – 1840

Steel Valley Deanery

St. Agnes Church, West Mifflin – 1867

South Hills Deanery

St. Anne Church, Castle Shannon – 1889

South Pittsburgh Deanery

St. Mary of the Mount Church, Mt. Washington – 1873

St. Wendelin Church, Carrick – 1873

Southwest Deanery

St. Philip Church, Crafton – 1839

Washington East Deanery

St. Agnes Church, Richeyville – 1867

Washington West Deanery

Immaculate Conception Church, Washington – 1855

Many other churches, contemporary or historic, in each deanery are lessons in themselves in terms of church art and architecture, furnishings, stained glass windows and statuary.

Local Highlights

A visit to your local parish Catholic cemetery or area Catholic cemetery to talk about the communion of saints, beliefs about after-life and parish ancestors in the faith.

If your parish was formed from another church in the deanery, a visit to the Mother Church if possible might be appropriate.

A visit to the monastery or motherhouse of religious orders associated with your parish or deanery. (Consult the current Diocese of Pittsburgh Official Catholic Directory).

Other Rites: A visit to Churches of other rites in your local area, such as the Byzantine Rite.

Ecumenical opportunities - a visit to your local synagogue or non-Catholic Church.

Participate in events that honor the religious and cultural heritage of your parish.

Service Opportunities

Visits to local nursing homes, soup kitchens, shelters if age appropriate.

Consult the current Planning Calendar and Service Directory from the Department for Youth and Young Adult Ministry for various service ideas, 1010 McNeilly Road, Pittsburgh, PA (412) 563-6373.

Drama

Veronica's Veil for older students, Lenten Season, Prince of Peace Parish, South Side.

Many local parishes sponsor Living Stations presented by their parish youth groups. (Check at deanery meeting to determine which parishes offer such events).

Spiritual Enrichment for Students and Catechists

Consult the Directory of Retreat Centers Catholic Dioceses of Pittsburgh and Greensburg

Note: Call ahead to any of the above listed facilities to make direct advance arrangements and to inquire into the possibility of a guided tour or participation in events.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION

- Begin by using the analogy of building a 3-D model of something they might do for a science project. For instance, if they were to build a model of a solar system, they would need to know something about the larger solar system on which to base their model. The same applies to our faith. In order to write good religion books, authors need a larger book that clearly states all major teachings of the Catholic faith. That way we will know if the religion books are accurate—just like you would want your model of the solar system to be accurate. The large book that helps us teach the faith accurately is called the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**. It is a collection of teachings from the Bible or “Holy Scripture,” church prayers, official documents from important church meetings, called “councils,” and writings of wise women and men from long ago.
- Write the word “Catechism” on the blackboard.
- Tell students that this lesson will talk about the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.”
- Ask students if they are familiar with the term *catechism*. How might a catechism be used? Why is a catechism important?

The catechist should explain that everyone is entitled to learn all of the truths of the faith. They too, as baptized children of God are entitled to learn the faith in its entirety – that is their right. Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II realized the importance of this and one of his major “projects” is the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

*You might do some research regarding this subject via the Internet or diocesan Learning Media Center (Jeff Hirst – jhirst@diopitt.org 412-921-5800 Ex24). Two resources are also available through Our Sunday Visitor: **What Catholics Believe** and **A Pocket Catechism for Kids** by Fr. **Kris D. Stubna and Mike Aquilina (Our Sunday Visitor:1-800-348-2440)***

- The catechist should share some knowledge about catechisms in general. For example:

Wise women and men long ago composed catechisms to help new Christians learn about our Catholic faith. When we know about what happened in the past, we can make good decisions about what to do now and in the future.

Quite a while after these first catechisms, larger catechisms were made that were meant as references for entire dioceses or even the worldwide Church. For example,

an important Church meeting in the 1500’s, called the Council of Trent resulted in, among other things, a book called the Roman Catechism, which guided the writing of smaller

catechisms or religion books up until the 1990's when our Catechism of the Catholic Church was published.

During the 1940's, 50's and part of the 60's, the Baltimore Catechism, one example of the small catechisms mentioned earlier, was one way in which students learned about their Catholic faith. The Baltimore Catechism was in question and answer form. Some examples were: "Who made me?" "Why did God make me?" "What is a sacrament?" They didn't have the religion books that are used today. So students back then (their grandmothers and grandfathers) memorized sections of the Baltimore Catechism and were expected to recite it in class. This of course, was in addition to practicing the faith by going to Mass, learning about the Saints and other important people in the Church, learning about special rituals of the Church etc.

- **Hold up a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Explain some of the history that went into composing the *Catechism* using the following as an example:**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a very large and very important book. It took seven years to write and many people working together to accomplish it. The Catechism was first written in French in 1992. Then an English copy was published in 1994. Latin is considered the official language of the Roman Catholic Church. So a Latin edition was written in 1997 and today it is studied and spoke of in hundreds of countries throughout the world.

You may consider the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an encyclopedia. It contains what we as Catholics believe, helps us to know what the Bible says, and what the Church teaches us. Our Holy Father, John Paul II, states that this book "is offered to all the faithful who wish to deepen their knowledge of the teachings of the Catholic Church." The Catechism is a classic source book which Catholics may use to study the great mysteries of our faith and how we are to live a Catholic Christian life.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church Lesson Plan

Goals:

- To explain the importance of a very important book, Catechism of the Catholic Church, in a way understandable to middle-school-aged students.
- To familiarize the students with the important role of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in our lives.
- To connect the realization that the contents of this book will help direct the lives of every Catholic of every nationality throughout the world.
- To assist the students in preparing to live their faith.

Objectives:

This lesson helps accomplish the following objectives from your Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines:

Catholic Elementary Schools (pp. 161,162)

- To inform the students that knowing our history and Tradition creates a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church: TTOC pp. 186-187; GDC #42-43, 203; CCC #81-84
 - By leading students to realize that such knowledge can assist Catholics to remain faithful TTOC pp. 323-327; GDC #46-47,255; CCC #94, 2447
 - By sharing a love for our Catholic faith and Tradition TTOC pp. 186-187; GDC #28, 95-96, 217; CCC #18, 425, 2226

Religious Education Programs (pp. 78,79)

- The mission of Jesus is kept alive in the Catholic Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit NCD #54, 92; TTOC pp. 157-158; CCC #737, 738
- We find the fullness of truth and life we have in the catholic Church, the living Body of Jesus Christ NCD #95; TTOC pp. 175-176, 186-197, 217-219; CCC #824
- Division among people is against the will of God; all must strive for the unity of the Church NCD #95; TTOC pp. 213, 293-294; CCC #817-819, 845

Background Information:

- The presentation of the Introduction of this lesson plan
- Assume the responsibility to present materials which are age appropriate

Presentation:

- Point out why the Church needed something written to unify our beliefs and how we live our Catholic lives in this era and in every era.
- Explain that learning our faith, called catechesis, is an education in our faith appropriate to the level of understanding of each person.
- Connect the Catechism to the students' religion textbook. Explain that there is a special committee within the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in Washington D.C. – the *Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism of the Catholic*

Church. Publishers of religion textbooks, such as the texts the students use, send their materials to this special committee to make certain that the textbooks are “in conformity” with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In other words, this special committee sees to it that the textbooks contain accurate Church teachings of the faith in its entirety. This is very important especially to parents who send their children to our parish programs and Catholic schools. Parents can be assured that the religion books we use contain all the truths of the faith and accurately portray what our faith teaches. Our diocese, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, only uses those religion textbooks that have been found in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

- The Catechism itself is directly meant for those responsible for teaching our faith: bishops, priests and catechists. However, all should be familiar with it.

Questions For Discussion:

How would you define a catechism? Bishop Wuerl, in his book, *“The Gift of Faith”* explains that a catechism is a book of faith.

- It tells us about the faith of the Catholic Church
- It explains that faith is a gift of God
- God wants us to learn about faith because we love Him and want to learn more about Him

How is the Catechism of the Catholic Church similar to an encyclopedia?

- An encyclopedia offers us more knowledge about something we want to understand.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
 1. Contains what we as Catholics believe
 2. Helps us to know what the Bible says and what the Church teaches

Activities:

- Display a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (second edition) in a prominent place in the classroom. It would be well to position it next to the Bible.
- Prepare a simple outline of the development of the Catechism.
- “Walk through” the Catechism with the students pointing out the important sections and how the Catechism is divided. (Table of Contents, Parts or Pillars of the faith, Prologue, Index, Abbreviations, and Glossary).
- Direct the students to explore in a simple fashion the **Pillars** of our Catholic Faith. Explain that the Catechism of the Catholic Church contains four “pillars” or sections of our faith: **Creed, Sacraments, Morality** and **Prayer**. List the **Four Pillars** on the blackboard. Play a simple game using specific words or phrases such as “commandments,” “Reconciliation,” or “Our Father,” then have the students decide under which of the pillars they belong.

- Ask students, in writing, a few simple questions (e.g. What does the Church teach about guardian angels?), instructing them to use the index of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in providing brief, written answers.
- Give the students a series of words to find in the glossary. Have them locate the words in the text of the Catechism. (Consider referring students to www.usccb.org/catechism).

Challenges:

- To encourage students to realize that our aim in life is to learn about God, that we may love Him, and be ready to live for Him in this life in order to live with Him forever in heaven.