

Grade 4

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS

Know Your Audience

Just like Jesus, every good catechist knows their audience.

“The catechist – must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.” (NDC #48)

Who Are Your Fourth Graders?

Faith Development

Children at this age:

- ❖ Continue to grow in their relationship with God through prayer. Can take greater roles of responsibility in prayer and worship.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.

Grade 4 Catechists

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Catechists can:

- 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.
- Stimulate the children's creativity through music, art, drama, and related activities. Provide an opportunity for them to express and appreciate religious concepts.
- 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. Encourage them 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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 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.

Physical Development

Children at this age:

- 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

Children at this age:

- 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

Children at this age:

- 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

NOTES

- ❖ Pope John Paul II in **On Catechesis in Our Time** encourages the use of advances in pedagogy; biology, sociology as they help us to model God's Divine Pedagogy (teaching us gradually in stages according to our level of development). The above noted information is consistent with such documents as the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catechetical Documents of the Church.
- ❖ The above sciences have limitations. While this information does provide references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken into account.

FOURTH GRADE

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Theme: Everyone has a call to holiness in imitation of Jesus. The Holy Spirit enlightens us and gives us the power to live as Jesus did.

The Catechist should:






- **Make copies of the Parent Page (front and back) for students to take home.**
- **Read the Background for Catechists Information.**
- **Become familiar with the *National Directory for Catechesis & the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*.**
- **Review previous understandings with students:**
 - 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.

FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS AND APPRECIATION OF THE EXPERIENCES INDICATED.

[Note about symbols: Of the six tasks of catechesis (knowledge of the faith; liturgy & sacraments; moral formation; prayer; community; missionary spirit) five have a symbol assigned to them. Knowledge of the Faith is the organizing task]

Symbol Key:

 = Liturgy & Sacraments  = Moral Formation  = Prayer
 = Community  = Missionary Spirit

Reference Code: CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Compendium = *Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*
USCCA = *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAITH

- ❖ **The kingdom of God is the presence of God's love, peace, and justice in the world.** Date completed _____

CCC #541-550, 2046; Compendium #107, 108; USCCA pp. 79-80



- Students will 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.

John 14:1-6...The Way, the Truth and the Life

Vocabulary: Kingdom of God, justice

- ❖ **The Ten Commandments are part of the covenant or promise between God and His people in the Old Testament.** Date completed _____

CCC #2056-2063; Compendium #437; USCCA p. 325



- Students will express an understanding of the relationship between God, self and others.

Exodus 3:6-10...The Call of Moses

Vocabulary: covenant, faith, obedience

❖ **The Ten Commandments guide our actions in daily life.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2069, 2072, Part Three, Section Two, Ch. 1-2; Compendium #439, 440;
USCCA pp. 327-328



- Students will explore ways in which each of the Ten Commandments applies to our lives and our relationships with others.

Matthew 22:36-40...The Greatest Commandment

Vocabulary: in vain

❖ **Jesus' new law of love tells us we must love God above all things and love others of diverse races, ages, cultures, and abilities.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1931-1933, 1934-1938, 2052, 2055; Compendium #411-413, 434-435;
USCCA pp. 309, 342-343



- Students will appreciate the Church as a universal community which includes persons of all ages, races, cultures, and abilities.

Luke 10:25-28...Law of Love

Vocabulary: Law of Love, Universal Church, Christian, Communion of Saints

❖ **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**

Date completed _____

CCC #2447; Compendium #520; USCCA pp. 159, 161, 508, 529



- Students will develop ways to show our special love for the poor.

Matthew 25...The Works of Mercy and Last Judgment

Vocabulary: Corporal Works of Mercy, Spiritual Works of Mercy, prophets

❖ **The eight beatitudes are teachings of Jesus that show us how we can be truly happy and share happiness with others.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1716-1719; Compendium #359-361; USCCA pp. 308, 453



- Students will understand that the beatitudes should guide our relationships with each other and lead us to God.

Matthew 5: 1-12...The Beatitudes

Vocabulary: Beatitude

❖ **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.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2041-2043; Compendium #431, 432; USCCA pp.318, 321,334-335




- Students will understand why it is important to participate in the weekly Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.

John 4: 21-24...Worship

Vocabulary: precepts of the church, holy days of obligation, liturgy, Baptism, Confirmation

Help the children learn the 6 Holy Days of Obligation.


- ❖ **Jesus calls each of us to personal conversion through a process of sorrow, forgiveness, and reconciliation.** **Date completed** _____
 CCC #1426, 1427-1428, 1430-1432; Compendium #297, 299-300;
 USCCA pp. 234-239, 241-242

 - Students will become aware of how Jesus' call to forgiveness of others can be used in real situations of hurt in our daily lives.

Luke 15: 11-32...The Prodigal Son

Vocabulary: conversion, reconciliation, sorrow, redemption


- ❖ **The Church, as a community of forgiveness, celebrates different forms of reconciliation through its prayer and liturgy.** **Date completed** _____
 CCC #1434-1439, 1443-1444, 1480-1484; Compendium #301, 302, 311;
 USCCA pp. 467-468

 - Students will understand that the Sacrament of Penance celebrates the forgiveness of Christ in and through the Church. Participate in class prayer services.

Luke 23: 29-43...The "Good Thief" on the Cross Vocabulary: community, hope

- ❖ **Sin and evil exist in our world today as a result of original sin and its consequences.** **Date completed** _____


CCC #385-387, 396-410, 1739, 1849-1850; Compendium #73, 75, 391;
 USCCA pp. 66-75

 - Students will grow in understanding of the ways in which friends, society, media can lead to occasions of sin as well as occasions of grace.

Genesis 2:4-3:24...The Fall Vocabulary: Original Sin, temptation, free will, grace

- ❖ **Mortal sin is a total break in our relationship with God and the Church.** **Date completed** _____


CCC #1855-1859, 1861; Compendium #395; USCCA pp. 237, 337-338, 520

 - Students will understand that God calls us to a life of community within the Church.

Matthew 5: 17-20...teaching about the Law Vocabulary: mortal sin


- ❖ **Venial sin is a less serious offense but one which weakens our relationship with self, God, and others.** **Date completed** _____

CCC #1855, 1862-1863; Compendium #396; USCCA pp. 237-238

 - Students will develop a sensitivity for practicing a daily personal examination of conscience.


Matthew 5: 17-20... teaching about the Law Vocabulary: venial sin

- ❖ **There is a difference between situations of accident or carelessness and deliberate moral choice, direct or indirect.** Date completed _____
CCC #387, 1860; Compendium #395; USCCA p. 313

 - Students will develop a sensitivity for practicing a daily personal examination of conscience.

Luke 10: 30-34...the parable of the Good Samaritan Vocabulary: occasion of sin

- ❖ **The sacrament of penance is an important sacramental way to express sorrow and experience God's forgiveness; we need to go to confession regularly.**
CCC #1422-1470; Compendium #302, 303; USCCA pp. 238-240

 - Students will help plan and join in a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.


John 20: 19-23...the gift of Penance

Vocabulary: examination of conscience, Penance, contrition, absolution

Review the steps in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance

- ❖ **God wants us to care for our bodies and respect the bodies of others.**


Date completed _____
CCC #2258, 2288-2291, 2300, 2519, 2521-2522; Compendium #466, 474;
USCCA pp. 441-443

 - Students will understand that belonging to the Church means following Jesus' way of living responsibly for self and others.

Matthew 5:8...Beatitude – Pure of Heart Vocabulary: covet

- ❖ **Division, people not getting along, is against the will of Christ.**


Date completed _____
CCC #817-822, 1868-1869, 1938; Compendium #163, 164, 399, 400, 413;
USCCA pp. 332-333

 - Students will appreciate the need to respect people of all religions.

Matthew 5: 21-22...teaching about anger Vocabulary: violence

- ❖ **Mary is an excellent model of how to be a faithful follower of Jesus; she is the model disciple in Christ's Church.**

Date completed _____
CCC #967; Compendium #197; USCCA pp. 39, 173

 - Pray to Mary, our special mother.

Luke 1: 26-38...announcement of the birth of Jesus

Vocabulary: disciple, Immaculate Conception, rosary, Assumption, Ascension

Pray the Rosary with the children.

- ❖ **Individual gifts and talents lead us to be disciples as priests, sisters and brothers, married or single people.**

Date completed _____

CCC #873; Compendium #178; USCCA p. 452



- Develop an understanding that individual gifts and talents are to be used in the service of others. Develop and participate in simple class projects to benefit persons in the parish and/or local community in need of special assistance.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31...applications to Christ

Vocabulary: virtue, vocation

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Apostles Creed

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Prayers before and after meals

Act of Contrition

The Rosary

