

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

# Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines

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Grade Seven

Diocese of Trenton - 2012

## **Introduction**

### **Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines**

#### **Vision**

The Diocese of Trenton, understanding its essential role of evangelization – to build and sustain the Catholic Church in today’s world and to create a legacy of faith for future generations, calls its catechists to actively proclaim, model and nurture the Good News of Salvation. It seeks to dynamically fulfill the mission to “make disciples of all nations,” “to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” “to teach observance of all the Lord has commanded us,” and “to know that God is with us always, until the end of time.” (Mt 28: 19-20)

Realizing that the Lord’s missionary command charges all catechists to teach in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines seek to assist in the formation of mature disciples by imparting a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the faith, promoting active participation in the liturgical life of the Church, integrating moral formation into a Christian way of life, teaching the rich tradition of prayer and devotion, educating toward a Christian integration of community life, and inculcating a missionary spirit that prepares Christians to witness Christ in society. (NDC: 2005, 60 -62)

#### **Purpose**

Religion Curriculum Guidelines provide a framework for catechists to plan, instruct and assess students by providing objectives that support the teachings of the Catholic Church in an atmosphere of multi-cultural diversity within parish Religious Education Programs, Catholic Schools and any other venues where catechesis is offered.

The General Directory of Catechesis articulates six tasks (GDC: 1997, #85) that provide the umbrella for religion curriculum objectives that comprise each grade level and are offered for introduction at lower grade levels and development as a child progresses on the faith journey. These tasks include:

- Promoting knowledge of the faith
  - Helping children to know, understand and integrate Catholic beliefs which are found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
- Liturgical education
  - Helping children to know how the Church worships through full and conscious participation at Mass and para-liturgies.
- Moral formation

- Helping children to recognize, understand and express that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive and serve others.
- Teaching to pray
  - Helping children to learn to pray the way Jesus did: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe.
- Education for community life
  - Building a sense of community life in order to come to an understanding of the Church as Communal life.
- Missionary initiation
  - Assisting children to become disciples of Christ, active in society and able to witness to, share their faith, and act on behalf of that faith for charity and justice.

It is the hope that all Religious Education programs will offer faith formation courses that are not only comprehensive in knowledge of the faith but instrumental in leading all students to a love of God and an active participation in the life of the Church. Since every culture brings unique expressions of faith to society, every religious education program should strive to be sensitive to cultural diversity and incorporate the prayers and traditions of their multi- ethnic populations.

### **The Goals of Catechesis**

The goals of catechesis for elementary school catechists emanate from the three major goals of adult catechesis as proposed in the Church document: ***Our Hearts Were Burning within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States.***

Specifically, these goals include:

- 1) to invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in holiness of life,
- 2) to promote and support active membership in the Christian Community, and,
- 3) to call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world. (OHWB: 2005, #68, 70, 72)

Curriculum Guidelines for elementary religious education facilitate the accomplishment of the broader goals for catechesis. The process of evangelization to proclaim the Word and hand it down to future generations is key to every vibrant religious education program. “Evangelizing is, in fact, the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.” (EN: 1975, #14) An integral element in catechesis is learning by discipleship. Curriculum guidelines strive to bring about that conversion to Jesus Christ that fosters an active decision to walk in the steps of Jesus. Religious literacy for every student of the Gospel should be a priority so that they will know the truths of the faith and be able to communicate them with clarity. Finally, religious education guidelines should engender the concept of life long faith formation since faith is a journey that begins at Baptism and ends when we are welcomed home to the Father.

With the three major goals of catechesis as an umbrella, religion curriculum guidelines need to support major objectives that encompass a comprehensive learning and living of the faith. Catechesis should be systematic and comprehensive so that children will be taught all the truths of the faith (i.e. the objective truths revealed by God in the life and work of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Apostles continuing to our day in the Magisterium). Every grade should offer appropriate key concepts and knowledge that support the six tasks of catechesis mentioned in the "Purpose" for Religion Education Guidelines. The "tasks," if accomplished, will send out to the world disciples who know the faith, live the faith, and have missionary zeal to pass it on to future generations. These disciples will actively participate in the liturgical and communal life of the parish and have a universal understanding of the Church's rightful place in the modern world

### **The Catechumenate as Inspiration for All Catechesis**

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC: 1997, #90) reminds us that the baptismal catechumenate is the model for catechizing. It adds that we should take note of "those elements of the catechumenate which must inspire contemporary catechesis."

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA: 1988 Edition) has four stages:

- 1) the Pre-catechumenate – a time of inquiry and welcoming,
- 2) the Catechumenate – the time to learn what it means to be a Catholic Christian,
- 3) the Purification and Illumination – a time of intensified spiritual preparation, and
- 4) the Mystagogy – the time after Initiation to understand more deeply the mysteries; intensify commitment to parish life and on-going formation.

It is the hope of the Church that all Christians will draw inspiration from the Catechumenate and that all catechesis will instill a personal conversion and a deepened response to the baptismal call to holiness.

### **The Role of the Catechist**

The primary catechetical goal of the catechist is to model God's love to others. Consequently, the primary requisite of the catechist is a love for God and for children. Further, the role of the catechist is so integral to bringing the Good News of Salvation to the people of God that parishes recognize their sacred role, and indeed, commission catechists yearly before the praying community at Sunday Mass. "The apostolic work of the catechist springs from the Sacrament of Baptism through which all believers come to share in the prophetic ministry of Christ and the evangelizing mission of the Church." (NDC: 2005, p. 228)

Catechists who are truly effective are practicing Catholics who participate in weekly Eucharistic worship and prepare for their apostolate through personal prayer and regular participation in professional development workshops. The workshops will offer sound

theology, classroom management skills, an understanding of appropriate age/grade level curriculum objectives and a practical use of textbooks and resources to supplement their teaching.

Catechists, because of their sacred ministry, are called to a personal holiness. Their spiritual lives should be characterized by a love of God, adherence to a regular practice of the faith, personal prayer, missionary zeal, active participation in the parish community and devotion to Mary, the first catechist, and the Holy Eucharist, the source of nourishment for the journey. (NDC: 2005, p. 229)

Catechists require an adequate understanding of prevailing cultures within the community and to teach with sensitivity to them. Catechetical programs need to ensure that the catechists receive assistance in developing knowledge of the faith and traditions that will transmit the message effectively to the diverse students entrusted to them.

Above all, catechists should know that faith is a gift. They are the instruments God has chosen to bestow the gift of faith enriched by knowledge, prayer, and activities fostering an understanding of the Church's traditions.

The Diocese of Trenton is deeply indebted to its catechists and offers its prayerful support for their sacred, ongoing ministry as well as guidelines and opportunities for on-going catechist formation.

### **The Role of the Parish**

The pastor has specific responsibilities that derive from his role as chief catechetical leader of the parish. The pastor shares these catechetical responsibilities with other members of the parish staff. "All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it." (CT: 1979, 696, #64)

The aforementioned Catechumenal model emphasizes that it is the parish community which catechizes. The parish is the local setting for communal prayer, liturgy, the reception of the sacraments and the works of charity and social justice that every Christian needs to embrace to live out his/her baptismal calling. For children and adults to be fully formed in faith, the pastor needs to ensure that:

- 1) Catechesis is emphasized in a way that is age-appropriate for adults, youth and children;
- 2) A total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with parish councils and catechetical leaders;
- 3) Catechesis for adults is a priority and recognized as the parish's primary mission;
- 4) Catechesis of youth and young adults is situated within a comprehensive plan;

- 5) Catechists at all levels are well-formed and trained;
- 6) Catechetical formation is available for all language groups;
- 7) The baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish; and,
- 8) The catechumenate is an essential process in the parish and serves as an inspiration for all catechesis. (NDC: 2005, p. 221)

By virtue of baptism everyone who ministers in the parish or has specific responsibility for catechesis is charged to be a model of faith and a person of prayer. As a member of a community called to follow Christ, each will understand his/her responsibility to be a disciple in the total parish community. All should strive to bring parishioners into the fullness of parish life, inviting them to continue on the faith journey begun at Baptism.

### **The Role of Leadership in Religious Education**

Just as effective leadership is integral to the positive outcomes of any organization, so is leadership in formally teaching the truths of the Catholic faith. The Church, in a unique way, calls all pastors, Directors of Religious Education Programs and Principals of Catholic Schools to minister in the footsteps of Jesus, by modeling the faith, practicing it daily and preparing all those who choose to nurture the faith of others through faith formation classes.

Leadership in Catholic faith formation must be well-grounded in the truths of the faith and profess them with zeal. In their leadership roles, they seek to offer professional development and pedagogical assistance to the catechists so that their ministry prepares students to live as Catholics whose faith has been nurtured and enlivened to proclaim the Gospel in everyday living and in liturgical celebrations with the praying community.

Pastors, in their roles as parish leaders, are called to ensure that “a total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership.” The pastor also has “the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated and met.” (NDC: 2005, p.221) Pastors, because of their leadership in a variety of parish ministries, often delegate managerial and ministerial aspects of catechetical programs to the Directors of Religious Education and Catholic School Principals while appreciating the serious responsibility of nurturing the spiritual life of every parishioner.

Parish Directors of Religious Education are generally responsible for the overall implementation of every program that comes under the umbrella of faith formation for adults, youth and children. This role includes:

- 1) Planning, implementation, and evaluation of the of the parish catechetical program,
- 2) Recruitment, formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists,

- 3) Implementation of diocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines, including the areas of catechist certification and supervision and administrative policies related to negligence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and the safety and protection of minors,
- 4) Collaboration with the pastor, other parish ministers, and appropriate committees, boards, and councils,
- 5) Assistance in liturgical planning, and,
- 6) Attention to their own personal, spiritual, and professional development. (NDC: 2005, p. 225)

The Catholic School Principal, as a spiritual and catechetical leader of the Catholic School community, is called to:

- 1) Recognize that all members of the faculty and staff are an integral part of the process of religious education,
- 2) Recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church,
- 3) Supervise the performance of and provide for the on-going development of, each teacher who functions as a catechist, i.e., teaches religion,
- 4) Provide opportunities for ongoing catechesis for faculty members,
- 5) Foster a distinctively Christian community among the faculty, students and parents,
- 6) Provide for the spiritual growth of the faculty, and,
- 7) Collaborate with parish, area, and diocesan personnel in planning and implementing programs of total parish catechesis. (NDC: 2005, p. 231)

### **The Role of Parents and Family**

The catechesis given by the parents with the family “precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.” (NDC: 2005, p. 234; CT: 1979, #68)

Catholic parents who bring their children to be baptized are the source of both human life and the life of the Spirit for their children. Since parents bring their children to the sacraments of Christian initiation, they are the primary educators of the faith for them. “Parents catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith.” (NDC: 2005, p. 234) Parents catechize their children by participating in the life of the parish, especially at Sunday Eucharist, by their willingness to evangelize and serve others, and by their participation in daily prayer (NDC: 2005, p. 234). Therefore, the education which takes place in the home is “more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured into periods.” (GDC, 255).

Parents assume their responsibilities to catechize their children at baptism. The parish, in turn, supports this responsibility by offering formal catechetical programs for children to help foster their children’s faith and assist them in preparation for full initiation into the Church with the reception of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. Parents may also choose to catechize their children formally at home, understanding that it is their responsibility to

teach a course in keeping with the objectives of the parish Religious Education Program. Formal study at home is arranged in consultation with the Pastor and the parish Religious Education leaders.

Parents have a responsibility to be formed in the faith so that they can pass it on to their children. Parishes offer programs to assist parents, especially when they are preparing their children for the reception of sacraments. Parents should also take advantage of Adult Faith Formation programs so that their personal faith journeys can be nurtured, enlivened and enriched.

### **The Role of the Catholic School**

Catholic Schools, by their mission, message and vision, are a rich source for evangelization and a place where the Gospel message is integrated into all the events of the day. “The Catholic School forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith.” (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*: March 19, 1977 #9) It is “not simply an institution which offers academic instruction of high quality, but, even more important, is an effective vehicle of total Christian formation.” (Teach Them, NCCB/USCC: 1976, p.5)

Since Catholic Schools are centers for evangelization, their catechetical programs are essential to their distinctly Catholic identity and character. (NDC: 2005, p. 231) Every member of the faculty, led by a faith-filled principal, is committed to advancing the Gospel message into every aspect of the school day. Catechetical instruction in the Catholic School, to be authentic, should be based on Sacred Scripture and the tenets of faith as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Religion teachers in Catholic Schools not only teach the Catholic Faith as an academic subject but also bear witness to the truth of what they teach. (NDC: 2005, p.232)

Conscious of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, great care has been taken in the Diocese of Trenton to generate Curriculum Guidelines for every academic discipline. Christian values and ideals are integrated with academic objectives to achieve knowledge that is current, comprehensive and faith-based. Teachers are called to an ongoing professional development that offers adult faith formation and pedagogy, including current technology, to support teaching strategies in every academic area.

Working collaboratively with the parish, the Catholic School affords a daily opportunity for “proclaiming and living the Gospel message, for learning and appreciating the teachings of the Church, for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence and love of the Liturgy, for building community, for prayer, for proper formation of conscience, for the development of virtue, and, for participating in Christian service.” (NDC: 2005, p. 233)

“By equipping our young people with a sound education, rooted in the Gospel message, the person of Jesus Christ, enriched in the treasured traditions and liturgical practices of our faith, we ensure that they have the foundation to live morally and uprightly in our complex modern world.” (“Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium,” USCCB, 2005)

### **Children’s Growth in Faith**

Just as all human life has stages of development in the cognitive, psychological, social and physical domains, it is important to recognize that every age has its unique characteristics for faith formation.

The early childhood stage of development is a critical time for religious education and formation, “This age group possesses, in the light of faith and reason, the grace of the beginnings of life, from which valuable possibilities exist, both for the building up of the Church and for the making of a more humane society.” (GDC: 1997, p. 117). When the child comes to school, the Church or the parish, the moment of catechesis is “aimed at inserting him or her organically into the life of the Church. The major thrust of catechesis is to give witness to the faith.” (CT: 1997, 37) When children are very young their frame of reference is strongly influenced by the parish program and the family. Catechesis should be family sensitive and involve, as much as possible, the cooperation and participation of the family. It is a time of moral formation where young children are exploring how and why things work and how they should behave in a variety of situations. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, p. 10)

Primary grade children, K-2, traditionally develop a greater attention span up to 20 minutes. For this group, then, concepts need to be clear, concise and presented one at a time. These children are interested in the concrete and factual rather than the abstract. They are able to participate in community celebrations and appreciate what it means to belong to a group. Catechetical programs for these children need to be designed to include them in liturgical celebrations as well as rituals, prayers and stories from Sacred Scripture. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, p. 19)

The intermediate grade child, Grades 3-5, is described as vibrantly alive, always in motion and full of enthusiasm. These children are on a plateau momentarily, physically and psychologically, though they are showing increased intellectual ability and moral growth. They have greater control over their fine and gross motor skills and enjoy activity and interaction. They show greater evidence of increased intellectual skills of memory and reasoning and are anxious to investigate, observe and draw conclusions. Morally, these children are beginning to show growth in conscience development. They

are becoming legalistic. The desire to identify with and to be of service to their own community of faith begins to take root at this time. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, pp. 26, 27)

Early adolescents, Grades 6-8, experience a rapid rate of physical growth that influences a high level of self-consciousness and self-awareness. They are also growing intellectually and moving away from concrete thinking to more abstract thought. They may need to question familiar paths, such as, why do they need to go to Mass? Early adolescents have a need for connection, affiliation, and identity. These catechists need to possess a great appreciation and understanding for the adolescent's desire to belong. The Church has an opportunity at this time, to provide a safe haven where the individual can learn about relationships and develop friendships. Therefore, the primary aim of adolescent catechesis is to sponsor youth toward maturity in Catholic Christian faith as a living reality. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, pp. 38, 39)

### **Inculturation**

Inculturation is “An ongoing reciprocal process between faith and culture.” It is a way of looking at the customs, rites and rituals of people to discover in them the saving presence of God. (“Who Are My Sisters and Brothers?” – Glossary, USCCB, April 2007)

“In relation to their faith, children/youth need an understanding of the rich ethnic and cultural diversity and universality of the Catholic Church. They need to understand their own culture as well as the cultures of the many people who make up the population of our country. This understanding reaches especially to those who are presently coming to the United States and who may be members of the same parish that the children/youth attend. This mutual cultural knowledge and understanding enriches their practice of the Catholic faith and intensifies their practice of charity in welcoming the stranger with a magnanimous Catholic spirit.” (Diocese of Wilmington – *Curriculum Outcomes for Religious Education*, 2007, p. 8)

Every parish has its distinct cultural make-up that should be celebrated and made a part of the fabric of faith formation. Cultural traditions enrich all the parish members and should be shared with the broader community so that all are welcomed and received with the peace of Christ.

### **Meeting the Needs of Special Learners**

Just as Jesus welcomes the children to come to Him, the local parish should be a welcoming community for everyone, especially those with special needs. Every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness. (GDC: 1997, p. 189) Care will be

taken that catechetical personnel are chosen for their ability to work with sensitivity and expertise in special education.

Children with special needs have a right to develop a relationship with God that the Christian community should recognize and foster. They should be integrated into ordinary catechetical programs as much as possible. Goals and objectives for these students should be modified, if necessary, so that the students can be assimilated in the regular classes and be active members of the learning community of faith.

Religion Curriculum Guidelines are to be adapted to the special needs children so that they can learn the basic tenets of faith, be part of a praying community, and be fully initiated through the reception of sacraments with their peers.

Since not every special needs student will be able to understand all the truths of the faith, concepts should be presented with clarity and age appropriate vocabulary so that they can partake in faith formation and be able to live their faith to the fullness of their being. In some instances, children may have severe disabilities that do not allow for them to be integrated into a regular class setting. In those instances the catechetical director should strive to provide the family with materials and strategies for home use so their faith journey from Baptism is allowed to progress and flourish. Modified assessments should be available for these students at every level. In the case of severe disabilities, the parish should offer, if possible, handicap accessibility to programs so that the majority of the parishioners can partake in faith formation experiences.

### **Integrating Family Life Objectives**

Family Life is the primary source of grace and education in the Catholic faith. Parents bring their children to the saving waters at Baptism and continue to nurture the faith of children by daily walking the faith journey with them.

The Diocese of Trenton promotes the sacredness of family life by encouraging Religious Education Programs to offer specific lessons that foster family life values. These values consider:

- 1) God's love for us and our love for God
- 2) Loving others as a response to God's love
- 3) Understanding sacrificial love
- 4) Expressing love through vocations
- 5) Promoting a virtuous life, and,
- 6) Choosing and living a chaste life

Religious Education guidelines seek to include objectives that integrate the ideals of traditional Catholic family life curriculum. These ideals come under the umbrella of the six tasks of catechesis, most notably those that foster a knowledge and love of God, a moral formation, and a respect and reverence for the presence of God in each person.

Objectives on human sexuality are met by the parents in the context of home and family. Parishes should make available parent information programs to assist in teaching human sexuality to their children with a faith perspective consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. “Catechesis on the sixth and ninth commandments includes instruction on the gift of human sexuality, its inherent goodness, and the proper place of that gift within the context of the faithful, fruitful, and life-long marriage.” (NDC: 2005, p. 177)

### **Alternative Models of Religious Education**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century often poses challenges to the family and professional lives of the Catholic Community. Since secular educational programs are offering a variety of methods and media and alternate settings to teach students, so too does the Catholic Church need to explore multiple possibilities for instructing students in the Catholic faith. Traditionally, parish Religious Education Programs and Catholic School religion curriculums taught the tenets of the faith in a weekly structure of lessons that effectively covered a course of study by the conclusion of the school year. Today, parishes need to consider the unique needs of their communities and offer programs that will respond to those needs while continuing to provide a comprehensive catechesis.

“Just as Christ instructed his followers according to their capacity to understand the message, the Church must also take serious account of the circumstances and cultures in which the faithful live in order to present the meaning of the Gospel to them in understandable ways.” (NDC: 2005, p.186)

These programs may be intergenerational in nature where adults and children come together in the parish setting to learn about the Catholic faith. They may offer summer programs that run for one or several weeks that instruct the students in the major objectives of a year’s course of study. They may offer intermittent programs that are liturgically seasonal so that the richness of the Church year is shared with students. They may also offer unique programs that pastoral leadership, in consideration of the expressed needs of the community, feels is appropriate to nurture the faith of its parishioners. These programs would also provide a comprehensive set of instructions and events that would meet the basic requirements of passing on the faith and assisting the students to be fully functional Catholics ready to take their places in the praying community.

As alternative models of religious education are considered or arise, they should be shared with the catechetical leadership of the Diocese of Trenton. Professional development programs for catechists should be instituted for these programs to give credence to their viability and prepare the catechists to teach the faith in these alternative settings.

Assessment instruments/activities should be an integral component of these programs to ensure that the six tasks of catechesis and their associated objective outcomes are accomplished.

### **Outcome-Based Education**

The Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines contain a set of objectives for the children to meet on every grade level. These objectives encompass the six tasks of Catechesis which include:

- 1) Promoting knowledge of the faith
- 2) Liturgical education
- 3) Moral formation
- 4) Teaching to pray
- 5) Education for community life
- 6) Missionary initiation

These tasks as stated in the General Directory of Catechesis (GDC: 1997, #85) provide the framework for the religious education outcomes to be met in every level from Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grades. Catechists, in their planning and preparation, should consider a variety of assessment tools to determine that the objectives of the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines are taught and ultimately learned by the students so that they can pursue their faith journeys to become fully initiated, faith-filled Catholics.

### **Integrating Technology and Media in the Curriculum**

Teaching for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century compels every catechist to bring the Good News of Salvation to their students through the use of technology and the media in a profound and comprehensive presentation. Today's children have been born into a technological society and are reasonably astute in using multi-media technology in every aspect of their lives. If technology provides an active path for learning and living successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, then the religious education program is encouraged to reflect and provide learning experiences that are supported through technology. The Internet can offer endless sources of information and research in the Catholic faith, and the operations systems of computers can provide avenues for expression through word documents, power point presentations, publishing software, podcasts, and a host of other programs that bring the faith to life and make it multi-dimensional.

Professional development in the educational use of technology should be considered by all teachers of religion. Just as there is an expectation that teachers of religion take part in religion certification programs to keep them current in the theology of the Catholic Church, there is an expectation that teachers will be reasonably proficient in using technology to effectively deliver the message of faith. Since Internet research can offer

an array of possible sites for further study, teachers of religion should also become familiar with sites that are approved by the Church to provide authentic Catholic doctrine. Applicable Internet resources are generally available through approved Diocesan textbook vendors and should be used as tools for appropriate research.

### **Format for Using the Religion Curriculum Guidelines**

In an effort to unify the teaching of religion throughout the Diocese of Trenton, a format for the Grade level chapters was developed by the Religion Curriculum Guidelines Committee to assist the catechists. This format allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the tasks of catechesis and the goals and objectives that comprise each task. It offers each catechist an opportunity to review the goals and objectives in the previous grade while providing a systematic roadmap of the truths of the faith that need to be imparted or reviewed on each grade level. It is the hope that every student who attends catechetical classes on a yearly basis will eventually have a broad understanding of Catholicism - its sacraments, prayers, practices and service orientation. The format for using each grade level of the Religion Curriculum Guidelines includes:

- 1) A Statement of the Grade level,
- 2) A “Before You Begin” section which states the faith development of the child on the given grade level and a review and integration of the concepts from the previous grade,
- 3) A “Student Outcomes” section which states the expectations for the student according to the six tasks of catechesis,
- 4) Scripture for the grade level, and,
- 5) Vocabulary for the grade level. **PLEASE NOTE: Vocabulary words, especially on the younger levels, should not be seen as a list of spelling words, or a list of words for which definitions are to be memorized. They are simply words to which students should be exposed, so that through repetition, the student will become familiar with the concept.**

The format provides a framework for all catechists so that planning appropriate lessons will be effective and the instruction of students enhanced. Students who participate in a Diocesan catechetical program should be well-informed in the truths of the faith and able to take their places as active Catholics in their individual Church communities.

## **Grade Seven**

- Before you begin.

### Review Concepts and Elements from Previous Grade Level

- Prayers- Our father, Hail Mary, Glory be, Nicene Creed
- The Bible is God's story and our story
- The story of Creation
- Patriarchs, Kings, Moses and the Prophets
- God the father sends His Son
- Jesus calls a community: the Church
- We meet Jesus in the Sacraments
- We are called to live like Jesus
- Saints are those who have lived as disciples

### **The Faith Development of the Seventh Grade Child**

Adolescence has traditionally been viewed as a critical period in development. There is a period of rapid growth that involves physiological and bodily changes accompanied by emotional, social, and physiological changes. According to the NDC, "The broadening, intellectual, and social world of the adolescent stimulates a questioning and critical spirit. There is a shift in cognitive functioning from the stage of concrete operation to the stage of formal operations according to Piaget. This increases the adolescent's ability to view the world. The adolescent is more capable of meaningful introspection and perceiving differences between how things are and how they might be."

The adolescent becomes increasingly more independent and seeks out others who are like themselves. While still needing the nurturance and affirmation of family, teens will be influenced by peers. Individual friendships also play an important role (Mussen, Congar, and Kagan, Pg. 678)

Early adolescents also develop a more personal relationship with God, and in becoming less egocentric they begin to include the needs of others. Young people can also understand the Church as a community of believers and as a way to become a better person. (Sadlier, We Live Our Faith, T 20)

Teachers will be successful in teaching this age group by using educational techniques such as small group projects, discussions, retreats, prayer days, and service projects. The gifts and talents of teens need to be affirmed. The young people have an avid interest in social justice and seek interaction in experiences of shared faith. Teachers need to be structured, prepared, and consistent when sharing faith with this age group.

Critical thinking skills that are successfully operative with adolescents include:

- Solving problems
- Making decisions
- Imagining outcomes
- Setting up criteria
- Finding reasons
- Reflection/meditating
- Choosing applications to life (Sadlier, T 21 Grade 7, We Live Our Faith)

### **1. Knowledge of the Faith**

Catechesis gives believers knowledge of the content of God's self-revelation which is found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and helps them know and understand the mysteries of the faith we proclaim in the Creed. (*cf. NDC, P. 60*)

Youth being catechized in seventh grade will:

- a. Explain that God created us to know, love and serve Him. (CCC 1-3).
- b. God makes Himself known. (CCC 50; 51-67).
- c. God gives us the gift of faith. (CCC 153).
- d. The Church gives witness to God's presence. (CCC 78-79).
- e. Scripture and Tradition reveal the truth. (CCC 80-83; 124).
- f. The truth is written in Scripture. (CCC 101; 105).
- g. The truth is handed down in Tradition. (CCC 84; 87).
- h. The Church lives by the truth. (CCC 890).
- i. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - the Blessed Trinity. (CCC 252; 257-60).
- j. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is central to our faith. (CCC232).
- k. God calls us to live our faith through loving relationships.
- l. God calls us to share His love with the world.
- m. God loves all God has created. (CCC 295).
- n. God invites us into a loving relationship with Him.
- o. God is merciful and gives us laws out of love. (CCC 1422; 1955; 238; 700).
- p. Jesus Christ is the greatest sign of God's love. (CCC 65-67).
- q. The Holy Spirit is always present with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is God, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the source of life and love. (CCC 685; 152-53).
- r. The Holy Spirit is active in God's plan of salvation. At Baptism, the Spirit comes upon the members of the Church and bestows strength to follow Christ and to live by His commandments. (CCC 243-45; 1108)
- s. The Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost, formed the first Christian community, and remains with the Church forever. (CCC 726; 731).
- t. The Holy Spirit is always guiding the Church. (CCC 738-41).

- u. God reaches out to help humankind. (CCC 422-24; 457).
- v. God offers His people the hope of salvation. (CCC 430-31).
- w. God promised a Messiah, and the promise of a Messiah came to fulfillment. (CCC 436; 599; 701; 711-16).
- x. Jesus is the promised Messiah and fulfills the hopes of Israel. (CCC 436-40).
- y. Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior, and a human being. (CCC 153).
- z. Jesus is true God and true man. Jesus invites us to friendship with Him. (CCC 464-69; 480-82).
- aa. Jesus ushers in God's kingdom. Jesus accepted His mission as Messiah at His Baptism and was faithful to it during His temptation.
- bb. Jesus teaches us to spread the Kingdom of God.
- cc. Jesus teaches us to pray for God's kingdom.
- dd. Jesus offers freedom and life.
- ee. Jesus heals and forgives. Jesus continues to heal body and spirit in the sacraments.
- ff. Jesus calls us to faith. Through faith and virtue, our life of grace grows, and we become more like Jesus.
- gg. Jesus shows God's power and love.
- hh. Jesus prepares His disciples for all that is to come.
- ii. Jesus tells His disciples He will always be with them.
- jj. Jesus suffers for the sins of humanity. Jesus' suffering led to eternal life and glory for Him and for us.
- kk. Jesus fulfills God's plan of salvation. Through Jesus, we find the way to the Father.
- ll. Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to the Father, and is still with us.
- mm. Christ's life and mission continue in the Church. Jesus calls each of us to be holy in a special vocation. (CCC 849-56).
- nn. The Church is the Body of Christ. Jesus leads us to life in God. (CCC 787-96; 872; 1123).

## **2. Liturgical Education**

Christ is present in the sacraments. The believer comes to know Christ intimately in the liturgical celebrations of the Church. Christ's saving action in the Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the sacraments. This is especially true in regard to the Eucharist. Catholics experience the closest communion with Jesus on earth that is possible when they receive His living Body and His Precious Blood in Holy Communion. Catechesis should promote an active, conscious, and genuine participation in the liturgy of the Church and an understanding of the doctrinal truths of the Creed which are its foundation. (*cf. NDC p. 60*)

Youth being catechized in seventh grade will:

- a. Demonstrate the various parts of the Mass: Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Preparation of the Altar and Gifts, Eucharistic Prayer, Communion, and Dismissal Rite.
- b. Review the responses of the New Roman Missal: Creed, Gloria, Confiteor, etc.
- c. Explain the Nicene Creed and Apostle's Creed.
- d. Indicate a knowledge that the Eucharist is the memorial of Jesus' sacrifice, His passion and death, and by celebrating the Eucharist we obey His command on the eve of His passion "Do this in remembrance of me." (CCC 1356)
- e. Articulate that the Church professes that the Eucharist is:
  - Thanksgiving and praise to the Father;
  - The sacrificial memorial of Christ and His Body;
  - The representation of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection
  - The presence of Christ by the power of His Word and of His Spirit (CCC 1357-58).
- f. Explain the liturgical year. (CCC 1163-71).
- g. Assist in planning of liturgical celebrations.
- h. Participate in liturgical celebrations in various ways.
- i. Articulate the importance of Sunday Mass in the Church.
- j. Explain that Advent is a time of waiting, anticipation, and a time of prayer and reflection.
- k. At Christmas, we celebrate the wonder of the Incarnation.
- l. At Christmas we celebrate the wonder of God's love.
- m. Lent is a season of reconciliation marked by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is also a time of change, grace, and renewal.
- n. The Triduum recalls the turning point in the history of our salvation.
- o. The Triduum leads us to the celebration of Christ's Resurrection.
- p. At Easter, we celebrate our new life in the risen Christ who shares His peace with us.
- q. On the Solemnity of the Ascension, we remember that Jesus Christ is with us always. In celebrating the Ascension, we celebrate God's everlasting power and glory. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire.
- r. Celebrate the season of Ordinary Time which gives us a strong foundation in Scripture.
- s. Demonstrate through the liturgical year that the Communion of Saints includes the disciples on earth, those in heaven, and the dead being purified. (CCC 95859)
- t. Participate in celebrations that honor the religious and cultural heritage of the parish such as customs for saints' days, special blessings, anniversaries, celebrations for holydays. (CCC 1204).

Through the sacraments we share in God's life and love. The grace of the sacraments enables us to respond to God's love. As the Church, we are united in Christ and celebrate His Paschal Mystery. The sacraments sanctify us and build up the Body of Christ.

Youth being catechized in seventh grade will:

- a. Recognize that in Baptism we receive new life in Christ. We are washed and anointed. Original sin, personal sin, and temporal punishment due to sin are removed by the waters of Baptism. At Baptism, we are welcomed into the Church. We celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. (CCC 1213-16; 1234-45).
- b. The Sacrament of Confirmation completes Baptism. We are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. (CCC 1285; 1302-5).
- c. Explain the Gifts of the Spirit. (CCC 1820).
- d. We are nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus gives his disciples a New Covenant. We are one with Jesus Christ as we celebrate the Eucharist. (CCC 1378-79).
- e. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus comforts all who are in need. Celebrates the Rite of Reconciliation. (CCC 1442-45).
- f. Participates in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist with regularity
- g. We celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and God's healing of both our bodies and our souls.
- h. Matrimony is a Sacrament at the service of Communion. In Matrimony, couples receive the grace for lifelong love and service. (CCC 1534; 1638).
- i. Jesus called his Apostles to continue His work. Those called to Holy Orders are consecrated to the service of others. (CCC 1536)

### **3. Moral Formation**

Catechesis must transmit the content of Christ's moral teachings and conform the believer to Christ through personal transformation and conversion. It should encourage the faithful to give witness to Christ and His Church's teaching in everyday life. As Catholics, we are called to carry the values of the Gospel and the teaching of our Church into the public square (cf. NDC p 61).

Youth being catechized in seventh grade will:

- a. Explain the Ten Commandments. (CCC 2083-2547)
- b. Identify the two Great Commandments. (CCC 2052)
- c. Demonstrate that the Beatitudes are a guide to the values of God's Kingdom and the way that leads to the building of the Kingdom and eternal life. (CCC 1716)
- d. Demonstrate that "conscience is the most basic awareness that some things are right and some things are wrong, and we need to know the difference

to act accordingly. It is our most secret core when we are alone with God whose voice echoes within us. We cannot ignore it. In fact, when we listen to our conscience, we hear God speaking. (CCC 1176; 1777)

- e. Demonstrate that by conscience, in a wonderful way, the law is made known which is fulfilled in the love of God and one's neighbor. Through loyalty to conscience, Christians are joined to other persons in the search for truth, also they search for the right solution to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships. Hence, the more correct conscience prevails, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by the objective standards of moral conflict. (*Church in the Modern World, #16*)
- f. Explain the Precepts of the Faith.
- g. Articulate that human life is sacred, from its very beginning to its natural end; that it is a gift from God and that all should have what they need for quality of life. (CCC 1926; 2258)
- h. Demonstrate the relationships which exist between sexual and moral development.
- i. Articulates that a follower of Jesus regards sex as a sacred gift used to express deep, life-giving love within marriage.
- j. Demonstrate that sexual attraction is God's plan to continue life. (CCC 2333)
- k. Explain that abstinence is the only appropriate sexual choice outside of marriage. (CCC 2349)
- l. Demonstrate that adolescence is a crucial time in life and part of the process of becoming a mature sexual person. (CCC 1704)
- m. Demonstrate that the Holy Spirit gifts us with virtues that enable us to make good choices in our relationship with others and lead a holy life. (CCC 1697)
- n. Demonstrate that the practice of virtues helps us to pursue what is good and choose to do good in concrete actions. (CCC 1803)
- o. Explain that all human virtues are grouped around four "cardinal" virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance; these virtues help us to practice good deeds with God's help. (CCC 1805-1810)
- p. Demonstrate that chastity and modesty flow from temperance and assist in integrating sexuality. (CCC 2337, 2521-2522)
- q. Explain that modesty is a virtue. It is respect for our own bodies and the bodies of others. (CCC 2524)
- r. Demonstrate that "The virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess: food, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs." (CCC 2290)
- s. Recognize the injustices caused by racism, ageism, anti-Semitism, consumerism, and sexism.
- t. Develop peacemaking skills within family, school, and community.
- u. Recognize prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as recommended practices.

## **Review the Ten Commandments**

### **The First Commandment**

- By explaining that the first commandment binds us to hope in God. Sins opposed to it include despair, presumption and tempting God.
- By instructing that we are called to worship God, the perfect sacrifice is the one Christ offered.
- By informing that opposed to true worship are idolatry, sacrilege and simony.
- By discussing that idolatry means to worship a false God. It also means to put anything in the place of God.

### **The Second Commandment**

- By teaching that the name of God should only be used in prayer.
- By explaining that swearing violates the commandment to honor God's name.

### **The Third Commandment**

- By informing that Sunday fulfills the Sabbath; it is the day of the Resurrection.
- By teaching the Sunday Liturgy is the heart of the Church's life. By participating, we show ourselves to be members of the Catholic community.

### **The Fourth Commandment**

- By understanding that the family is based on marriage, which exists for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children.
- By recognizing that grown children must support their parents in old age.
- By being aware that the duties of a Catholic are to be a good citizen and to build a good and just society. Some responsibilities include paying taxes, voting and defending their country.

### **The Fifth Commandment**

- By the discovering that "The use of drugs and alcohol inflicts very grave damage on human health and life....Clandestine production and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices." They constitute direct cooperation with evil.
- By understanding that justice and charity lead to peace; injustice to war.
- By explaining the Church's teaching, "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 and is gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life."

### **The Sixth Commandment**

- By teaching that the sexual act finds its place only in a life-long marriage; this excludes masturbation, fornication, sex for engaged couples, "living together," trial marriage and adultery.
- By realizing that culture has a great effect on sexual morality such as pornography and prostitution.
- By understanding that every marriage act must be open to children; this excludes all artificial means of contraception.

- By discussing that rape totally degrades sexuality and divorce is a grave offense against the dignity of marriage.

**The Seventh Commandment**

- By teaching that “access to employment and to professions must be open to all.”
- By clarifying the search for solidarity increasingly has international implications; rich nations must work for the development of poorer nations.
- By discussing that to work for the common good in economic and political realities is especially the role of the Catholic laity.

**The Eighth Commandment**

- By recognizing that reputation and honor are aspects of a person’s human dignity. These are injured by rash judgment, detraction and calumny.

**The Ninth Commandment**

- By stressing that purity requires modesty, which recognizes and protects the dignity of the person.

**The Tenth Commandment**

- By teaching that one should not covet (desire) anything that belongs to his/her neighbor.

#### **4. Teaching to Pray**

Conversion to Christ and communion with Him will lead the faithful to His disposition of prayer and reflection. Jesus’ entire life, death, and Resurrection were an offering to the Father. The Our Father is the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray and the model of Christian prayer. The handing on of the Our Father is a summary of the whole Gospel and a true act of catechesis. The most effective catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer. (*cf. NDC p. 61*)

Throughout humanity’s history, from creation to our present day, God has continued to reveal Himself to us and call us to “that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, God’s initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals Himself and reveals man to Himself, prayer appears to be a reciprocal call.” (*CCC 2567*)

Youth being catechized in seventh grade will:

- a. Explain that prayer is the raising of our hearts and minds to God.
- b. We can pray in the silence of our hearts or we can pray aloud.
- c. Demonstrate that the mystery of faith professed in the Creed, Liturgy, and conformity to Christ in the Holy Spirit requires that the faithful live in a personal relationship with the living and true God; this relationship is called prayer.
- d. Articulate that God calls each person to this mysterious encounter called prayer. (*CCC 2591*)
- e. Learn that Mary, in her prayer, is an example to us as she offers her whole

being in faith especially in her *fiat* (her acceptance of God's design for salvation through the message of the angel at the Annunciation and her *Magnificat*).

- f. Describe different forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise (CCC 2644-2649), silent, centering and guided prayer, prayer journaling, praying with movement, gesture, praying with song, and spontaneous prayer.
- g. Demonstrate the special place that the Our Father has in the prayers of the Church such as the Eucharistic Liturgy, other sacraments and in the New Testament
- h. Explain that when we pray we may use the prayers of the Church prayers from the Bible, prayers that the saints wrote or we may pray in our own words using the words that are in our heart.
- i. Learn, review and understand the following prayers:
  - Sign of the Cross
  - Our Father
  - Hail Mary
  - Glory Be
  - Act of Contrition
  - Apostle's Creed
  - Nicene Creed
  - Grace before and after Meals
- j. Rosary
- k. Be familiar with the Church's devotions such as Stations of the Cross and Benediction or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

## **5. Education for Community Life**

The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of all who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onward toward the kingdom for the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history. (*Church in the Modern World, Preface*)

Jesus said to his disciples, "Love one another as I have loved you." (*cf. John 13:34*) This command guides the disciple's life in the Catholic Church and global community. Catechesis should encourage: an apprenticeship in Catholic living, a spirit of simplicity and humility, special concern for the poor, care for the alienated and the immigrant stranger, fraternal correction and love, common prayer, and mutual forgiveness. Members of the Body of Christ receive special graces and gifts to help build up the Church. Ecumenical charity and sensitivity as well as a zeal for unity among Christians are emphasized. (*cf. NDC pp. 61-62*)

Youth being catechized in Seventh Grade will:

- a. Explain that God gives us many gifts.
- b. As members of the Church, we come together in faith, hope, and love.
- c. The Church is One and Holy.
- d. The Church is Catholic and Apostolic.
- e. Explain that we pray with our Church for Christian unity; this unity, which Christ bestowed on His Church from the beginning, transcends human powers and gifts (*CCC 820-822*) Encourage opportunities for youth to join with Protestant Churches in local community Ministerium functions such as ecumenical prayer services, CROP walks, outreach to the hungry, etc. to learn and make real this desire of Christians for unity.
- f. Articulate that other Christian denominations share elements of faith with Catholicism among them: belief in Jesus Christ, Baptism, devotion to the scriptures, the practice of social justice. (*GDC 86; CCC 818-819*)
- g. Demonstrate that Jesus asks us to love and love our neighbor. (John 13: 34-35)
- h. Explain when we see wrongdoing, we as Christians, following Jesus' teaching in (Matthew 18:22 and 18:15) should seek to right the wrong (*CCC 1435, 1829*) as assisted by adults in this matter.
- i. Articulate that Jesus calls us to mutual forgiveness, (Matthew 18:22), and that forgiveness begins in the family. (*CCC 1657, 2227*)
- j. As Jesus' disciples, we are called to follow His example, and we have a responsibility to care for others.
- k. We can perform the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- l. We are called to justice and peace.
- m. Through Catholic social teaching, we live out our discipleship.
- n. Poor and vulnerable people have a special place in Catholic social teaching. A basic moral test of a society is how its most vulnerable members are faring. This is not a new insight; it is the lesson of the parable of the Last Judgment. (Matthew 25) Our tradition calls us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our sisters and brothers but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response." (*USCCB, A Century of Social Teaching, 6-7*)
- o. Identify suffering as a global experience.
- p. Recognize the manner in which charity is practiced in our family, our parish, and our school. (*CCC 952*)
- q. Articulate that the practice of social justice benefits the global community. (*CCC 953*)
- r. Reflect on service opportunities for himself/herself within the local community.
- s. Become involved in service outreach projects, clothing, and food collections.

- t. Articulate how persons give evidence of witness to their faith through their work.
- u. Accept the invitation to become a part of parish community experiences
- v. Name some of the saints and witnesses of faith whose lives were dedicated to service and missionary work, i.e. St. Francis of Assisi, Saint Katharine Drexel, and Blessed Mother Teresa.
- w. Demonstrate that self-respect and respect of others of all races, creeds, colors, and national origin is a response to God's gift of creation, who created the human race in God's own image and likeness. (*Genesis 1: 26; CCC 2331, 357*)
- x. Recognize that the human person is not only sacred, but social. We articulate our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. The family has major contributions to make in addressing questions of social justice. It is where we learn and act on our values. We also have the right and responsibility to participate in and contribute to the broader communities in society...A central test of political, legal, and economic institutions is what they do to people, what they do for people, and how people participate in them." (*USCCB, A Century of Social Teaching, 5*)
- y. Demonstrate that many persons from other countries are coming to our country because they do not have enough food and money to live in their country; some of these people are called migrants and work on our farms and in many other places; God call us to be kind to these people and welcome them. (*Colossians 3: 12-13; Galatians, 3:28*)
- z. Demonstrate that God has entrusted to all human beings responsibility for the world and all its creatures and resources. (*CCC 373*)

## **6: Missionary Initiation**

When the words "missionary initiation" are used to describe the sixth task of catechesis, we are not meant to envision it as being at the bottom of the list, a task that we might get to after we accomplish the other five tasks. Rather, "missionary initiation" means preparing to take on the mission of Jesus: to love others, to serve those in need, and, perhaps most importantly, to spread the Good News of salvation. Spreading the Good News is what we call "Evangelizing" and is described by Church leaders as the foundation of the house of the Catholic Faith. The other five tasks build upon it, so that we might see "missionary" and "evangelizing" as adjectives describing each of our five tasks (i.e. missionary or evangelizing "knowledge of the faith," missionary or evangelizing "liturgical education," etc. )

The words "missionary" and "evangelization" are sometimes misunderstood by Catholics today. In the past, we spoke of missionaries as those brave saintly people who went off to foreign lands to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of him or the Church (the mission *ad gentes*—"to the nations").

But the truth is that all Catholics are called to evangelize. As early as 1983, Pope John Paul II appealed to the whole church by saying, "...The moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a **new evangelization** and to the *mission ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples." (*Redemptoris Missio*—"Mission of the Redeemer," 3)

What is "new" is the focus on reaching out to those family members and friends that are already in our lives. Every one of us is asked to spread the Good News to others—our children, our peers or even our parents.

To be "missionary" is to be Catholic, to be ready and willing to share our faith with others in everyday life at home, at school, in our neighborhood and our town, with our family, friends, and acquaintances right here, right now. Jesus tells us, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (Jn. 20: 23) Through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (Sacraments of Initiation), we are called and sent to continue Jesus' mission, to invite everyone to experience his love and forgiveness. To live out this call, we need to think and act like missionaries, like evangelists.

Catechesis seeks to form disciples of Christ who bear witness to their Catholic faith in society. A missionary spirit of evangelization is cultivated and nourished by the teaching and attitudes of Jesus Christ. Every means should be used to encourage vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and lay ministry and to awaken special missionary vocations. Catechesis recognizes that other religious traditions reflect the "seeds of the Word" that can allow for both inter-religious dialogue and evangelization (*cf. GDC 86*)

Youth being catechized in Seventh Grade will:

- a. Articulate that Jesus asks us to share the Good News of the Gospel and our Catholic faith with those we meet (for this age such sharing would be with mainly relatives and friends). (CCC 905)
- b. Articulate that wherever they are, they are followers of Jesus and their behavior should show that they are Christians. (CCC 2013)
- c. Recognize that some are called to the consecrated life.
- d. Recognize that some men are ordained as priests and permanent deacons.
- e. Vocations require prayer and discernment.
- f. Articulate that our love for the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ strengthens us to share our Catholic faith with others; powerful examples are great Catholic missionary saints e.g. Saint Patrick, St. Francis Xavier, the North American martyrs, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Catherine Drexel, and St. Francis Cabrini. (CCC 849, 851)
- g. Explain that every Catholic is called to have a missionary spirit that radiates the power of Christ within us; our own Catholic faith is strengthened when it is given to others. (*On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, Redemptoris Missio, John Paul II, 1990, #2*)

- h. Recognize the sense of identity of Church as community. Belonging to the Church also means participating in its mission. As missionaries for Christ, it is important to cooperate through prayer, sacrifice, and material support of the Church's mission through the Holy Childhood Association - the Church's primary vehicle for fostering mission spirit, and education. ( Pope John Paul, II "*Redemptoris Missio*," #84; USCCB, "To the Ends of the Earth," #66)
- i. Articulate that the universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission; every member of the Catholic Church is called to holiness and to mission.
- j. The Spirit manifests Himself in a special way in the Church and in her members. Nevertheless, His presence and activity are universal, limited neither by space nor time. The Second Vatican Council recalls that the Spirit is at work in the heart of every person, through the "seeds of the Word: to be found in human initiatives--- including religious ones—and in humankind's efforts to attain truth, goodness, and God himself...The Spirit's presence and activity affect not only the individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures, and religions. Indeed, the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history." (*Mission of the Redeemer, Encyclical Letter of John Paul II, 1990, #28*)
- k. Demonstrate that priests act in the person of Christ and in the name of the whole Church, and that priesthood reaches its high point in the celebration of the Eucharist. (*CCC 1552-1553*)
- l. Demonstrate that, by reason of their Baptism, the laity have a special place in the Church and are called to spread the Gospel by their words and actions. (*CCC 897-900*)
- m. Demonstrate that Christianity has roots in Judaism and that both religions share the belief that the Old Testament is the Word of God. (*CCC 123, 1096*)
- n. Articulate the existence of other non-Christian religions, e.g. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. (*GDC 85-87, NDC p. 63*)

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Story of Zaccheus	Luke 9: 1-10
Cleansing of the Ten Lepers	Luke 17: 11-19
The Sermon on the Mount	Matt. 5: 1-12
The Transfiguration	Matt. 17: 1-8
The Lord's Supper	Mark 14: 22-26
The Vine and the Branches	John 15: 10-10
The Parable of Mercy in the Gospel of	Luke 15: 1-32
The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son	
Creation and The Call of Jacob	Genesis: Chapter 1, 3, 4 and 27:
The Call of Moses	Exodus: Chapter 3
God's Fidelity	Deuteronomy 4: 29
Birth of Immanuel, Kingdom of Justice	Isaiah: 7, 11, 32, 43, and 58
Promise of Redemption, and Social Justice	Jeremiah: 1, 14, and 23
Call of Jeremiah, and Messianic reign	
Gratitude, Praise, and the Good Shepherd	Psalms: 34, 122, and 146:
Promise and Coming of the Spirit	Acts of the Apostles: 1,2, 4
The Children of God	Romans: 8: 16-17
One Body in Christ	Romans: 12: 5-12
Diversity of Gifts	I Cor: 12
Freedom in the Spirit	II Cor: 3:17
We belong to Christ	Galatians 3:29
Live in the Spirit	Galatians: 5:25
Unity in the Body of Christ	Ephesians: 4: 4-6
Put on Christ	Colossians: 3:12
Pray without ceasing	1 Thes. 5:17
God spoke through the Son	Hebrews: 1: 1-2
Anointing of the Sick	James 5: 14-15 & 2: 14
Living Stones and Service	I Peter 2: 9 and 4: 10:
The Word of God and Love	I John Chapter 1 and 4:9

## **Vocabulary**

Almsgiving	Ecumenism
Apostasy	Evangelical counsels
Beatitudes	Evangelization
Catechumenate	Heresy
Catechumens	Kingdom of God
Catholic social teaching	Liturgy of the Hours:
Chrism	Magisterium
Deposit of faith	Paschal Mystery
Divine Inspiration	Prophet
Divine Revelation	Sanctifying grace
	Schism

Synoptic Gospels  
Theological virtues  
Vocation  
Works of Mercy

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**Saints** – Children will be introduced to the following saints using stories:

St. Anselm

St. Bernadette Soubirous

St. Bonaventure

St. Ignatius Loyola

The North American Martyrs

St. Francis Cabrini

St. John Chrysostom

St. John of the Cross

St. Juan Diego

St. Therese of Lisieux

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

St. Katharine Drexel