

Parents' Guide to Diocesan Faith Formation Curriculum
Grade 1

'God's love is communicated to infants and young children primarily through parents.' Parents have shared the gift of human life with their children, and through Baptism have enriched them with a share in God's own life. Parents are the primary educators [of their children] in the faith. (NDC, 203 & 101)

What exactly is the Diocesan Faith Formation Curriculum?

- A document that clearly states what participants in parish faith formation programs and Catholic elementary school religion classes should be able to know, understand, and do at each grade level.

What is the aim of this guide?

- The primary aim of this guide is to support parents as the first teachers of their children in their faith.
- To serve as tool for communicating the content for each age/grade level of children to parents.
- To provide some suggestions for integrating faith practices in their homes.

How is it organized?

- The curriculum is organized according to the six tasks of Catechesis, referred to as the **Six Key Elements** of a lived Catholic Faith; while always remembering that the outcome for catechesis is *growing in relationship with Christ*.

These six key elements are:

- o Knowledge of the faith;
- o Liturgy and Sacraments;
- o Morality;
- o Prayer;
- o Education for Living in the Christian Community;
- o Evangelization and Apostolic Life.

For Each Element

- There are standards or broad headings. All these standards should be covered in every program for adults, youth and children.

For Each Standard

- Each standard in turn has age appropriate indicators or knowledge, skills or behavior.
- These indicators will guide instruction and activities in faith formation programs and classrooms.

What do the different fonts mean?

- **Core items that must be covered in all parish and school programs are in bold print.**

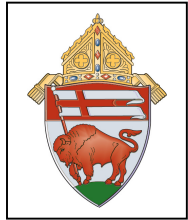
- *Enrichment items that are optional and can be covered if there is time are in italics.*

What is meant by words being underlined?

- Underlining means this is a vocabulary word to know. These words and their definitions will be available on the Diocesan Website on the curriculum page in a Glossary. When a simpler age appropriate definition is needed it is within the indicator itself.

CHILD PROTECTION: SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

Diocesan policy requires that a session on Safe Environment is offered to all children in our parish and school programs at the start of each program year. More information can be found on the Diocesan website and should be shared by parish catechetical leaders and principals with families at the beginning of each year.



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Key Element I: Knowledge of the Faith – **What We Believe**

“Sacred Scripture has a preeminent position in catechesis because Sacred Scripture “presents God’s own Word in unalterable form” and “makes the voice of the Holy Spirit resound again and again in the words of the prophets and apostles.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church is intended to complement Sacred Scripture. Together with Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture constitutes the supreme rule of faith.” (NDC no. 24)

At-Home Ideas:

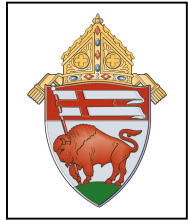
At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Knowledge of the Faith** in your home: Parents of primary-grade children provide the most powerful influence on forming the faith of their children by living out their own faith with consistency and joy. Children experience God’s loving presence in the everyday care and nurturing provided by parents. Families can also engage in primary-age actions and discussions of the Catholic faith. When children hear about the faith but do not see it lived out, they question its importance.

Standard 1 **CREED:** Understand, believe and proclaim the Triune and redeeming God as revealed in creation and human experience, in Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, and as entrusted to the teaching office of the Church.

- Show understanding that God is the creator of all things in the universe, calling all creation good.**
- Indicate belief that God made human beings in his own likeness, giving them responsibility for the care of the earth.*
- Comprehend that I am made by God and destined to be with him forever.**
- Show understanding that God reveals himself to us in all of creation.*
- Comprehend that God is everywhere, all knowing and all loving.*
- Show understanding that God created me as good and cares for me as a loving parent.**
- State belief that there are Three Persons in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the Holy Trinity.**
- State that Jesus is God’s Son who was sent by him to teach us how to love one another as his children.**
- Identify God the Holy Spirit as God’s Spirit alive in us and in the Church.**
- Identify Mary as the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God.**
- State meaning of the name of Jesus as “God saves” and Christ as “anointed”.**
- Describe the meaning of heaven as being happy with God forever.**
- Describe the meaning of faith as a gift from God that enables us to follow him.**
- Identify the church as a community of those who believe in God and who ratify that belief by being baptized.**

Standard 2 **SACRED SCRIPTURE:** Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God’s revelation through Sacred Scripture.

- Identify the Bible as a sacred book that reveals who God is and his love for us.**
- Name the Gospel as the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**
- Identify the Angel Gabriel as the messenger who told Mary that she would be the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God, at the Annunciation. (Lk 1:26-38)*
- Identify that Mary’s cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah were the parents of John the Baptist (Lk 1:5-25).*



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- Identify the Holy Spirit of God at work in the lives of Mary and Elizabeth.
- Retell the story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem as written in the Gospel of Luke. (Lk 2:1-14)
- Describe Nazareth as the place where Jesus grew in strength and wisdom. (Lk 2:39-40)
- Show understanding that Jesus was filled with God's Holy Spirit and had a mission to announce the good news through teaching and healing.
- Articulate the teaching of Jesus about who is greatest in the Kingdom of God.
- State that Jesus taught the people by using stories called parables.
- Show understanding that Jesus prayed and taught his friends how to pray.
- State that Jesus had power to heal others and raise people from the dead.
- State that Jesus had many friends who followed his way.**
- Show understanding that Jesus taught in the **temple** and the temple leaders questioned his authority to teach.
- Describe how Jesus ate with his closest friends on the night before he died. (Lk 22)**
- State that Jesus forgave those who crucified him before he died. (Lk 23:34)**
- Describe Jesus' Resurrection from the dead and appearances to his friends. (Mt 28, Mk 16, Lk 24, Jn 20-21)**
- State that Jesus ascended into heaven.**

Key Element II: Liturgy and Sacraments

- How We Celebrate

“Faith and worship are as closely related to one another as they were in the early Church: faith gathers the community for worship, and worship renews the faith of the community... In her Liturgy, the Church celebrates what she professes and lives above all the Paschal Mystery, by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.” (NDC no. 32)

At-Home Ideas:

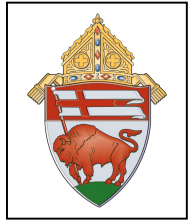
At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Liturgy and Sacraments** in your home: *Parents educate and prepare the primary child for first celebration of the sacraments of Penance and reconciliation and Eucharist by connecting daily experiences to Gospel teachings and their own experience of these sacraments. Families participate at Sunday Mass with the parish community and discuss the meaning of symbols. Simply talking about the readings from Mass is a powerful tool to begin to engage your child more in the liturgy.*

Standard 3 SACRAMENTS: Understand and participate in the sacraments of the Church as effective signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.

- Identify **sacraments** as signs of God's love for me.
- States that Jesus gave the sacraments to the Church.**
- Describe the Sacrament of Baptism as the first sacrament allowing Christians to receive other sacraments.**
- Identify the essential elements of Baptism.*
- Describe the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as God's sign of **forgiveness** to us.**
- Exhibit basic recognition of the Sacrament of the Eucharist as a sign of Jesus sharing Himself with us during the Mass.**

Standard 4 LITURGY: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the liturgy year and epitomized in the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life.

- Show respect for God by entering the church building quietly, making the **sign of the Cross** with Holy Water and genuflecting to the presence of God in the tabernacle.*



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- Identify objects in the Church: [altar](#), [cross](#), [tabernacle](#), [sanctuary light](#), [Easter candle](#), [baptismal font](#), statues of saints, image of Mary, holy water fonts, [Stations of the Cross](#).
- Identify the [baptismal font](#) as the place of the ritual of Baptism where we are first welcomed into the Church.
- Describe the Mass as a time that God is present to us in His Word and in the Eucharist.
- Identify the proclamation of the [Gospel](#) at Mass as hearing God's Word spoken to us.
- State that Christ is present in those assembled, in the Word of God and in the priest.
- Identify when the priest speaks the words of Jesus at the [Last Supper](#) as the time that we recognize Jesus' presence with us in the bread and wine that become his Body and Blood.
- Discuss when and how we pray the [Our Father](#) together at Mass as God's children.
- Describe what people do when they receive Jesus in [Holy Communion](#).
- Identify the symbols and the colors of the seasons of the Church Year: [Advent wreath](#), [Lent ashes](#), [palms](#), cross, [Easter](#) candle.

Key Element III: Morality - How We Live

“Christ is the norm of morality. Christian morality consists in following Jesus Christ, in abandoning oneself to him, in letting oneself be transformed by his grace and renewed by his mercy, gifts which come to us in the living communion of his Church.” (NDC no. 42)

At-Home Ideas:

At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Morality** in your home: *Parents are responsible for forming a child's conscience through age appropriate instruction in right and wrong actions. Children will also notice the actions of their parents and other responsible adults and ask why they acted how they did. Parents have the opportunity to shape their child's view of the world and actions of people.*

Standard 5 **Conscience:** Develop a moral conscience informed by church teachings.

- List and know images of the Holy Spirit.
- Identify that we live good lives with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Recall that God created us to love – to do what is right and good in response to his love for us.
- State that God gives us the ability to choose right or wrong.
- Define sin as choosing to disobey God.

Standard 6 **Christian Living:** Understand and live the moral teachings of the Church through a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ expressed in love for God, conversion, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, the dignity of the human person and love of neighbor.

- Illustrate ways Jesus teaches us to love God and our neighbor, and state the Two Great Commandments of God and their meaning (Jn 13:34-35, Lk 10:25-28).
- Show understanding that God created me as good and loving, to be respected and loved by others.
- Identify that rules in class and at home help us know how to treat each other fairly and to respect each other as children of God.
- Recall that when other children are doing something that harms us, themselves or others, such as bullying, we should ask them to stop or ask parents/teachers to help.
- Exhibit sense that we have the light of Jesus shining in us so that we might love as Jesus showed us how to love.
- State that God wants us to love and obey our parents.



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- Exhibit understanding of obedience to others who care for our safety.
- Participate in works of charity with others in our family, parish and school. We practice the charity of the Lord in good works and love for all.
- Explain the ways in which Jesus shows us how to live.
- Acknowledge and affirm that Jesus taught us to respect and treat each and every person as a member of the family of God and everything in creation as a gift of God.

Key Element IV: Prayer

- How We Pray

“God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer” (CCC no. 1075). His initiative comes first; the human response to his initiative is itself prompted by the grace of the Holy Spirit... In prayer, the Holy Spirit not only reveals the identity of the Triune God to human persons but also reveals the identity of human persons to themselves. (NDC no. 34)

At-Home Ideas:

At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Prayer in** your home: *Families help children memorize traditional prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary through daily repetition. The family prays together regularly at mealtime, bedtime, and special seasonal observances and to commemorate significant life events. The model of a parent in prayer can be the most inspiring catechesis on prayer a child will receive.*

Standard 7 **PRAYER:** Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer and acknowledge prayer as the primary way we deepen our knowledge of God in the community.

- Recognize that prayer is listening to and talking to God as our loving Father.
- Define prayer as coming into God's presence; when we love him, we are with him.
- Explain how Jesus teaches us to pray.
- Memorize and recite the Sign of the Cross, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be.
- Discuss why morning, mealtime and night prayers are important.
- Explain what **family prayer** is.
- Understand that prayer together, such as **family prayer**, is a way of life for Christians (Mt 18:19).
- Share an example of a prayer for the dead.
- Understand that we pray when we talk to God with our minds and hearts.
- Recognize that asking God for his help is called a prayer of petition.
- Understand that the Holy Spirit helps us to pray.
- Recognize that when we pray to the Blessed Mother and the saints, they **intercede** to Jesus for us.
- Discuss why it is important to pray by yourself and with your family.
- Describe how the church is a special and sacred place.

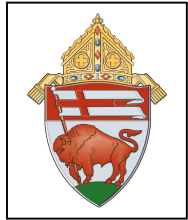
Memorize and recite the Sign of the Cross, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be. *Please note that the full texts of the prayers and practices for Catholics to teach your child are found in the online glossary and also in a downloadable document online: Appendix 2 **KEY PRACTICES AND PRAYERS FOR CATHOLICS.***

Sign of the Cross [CCC no. 2157; cf. 786]
[Note: The directions for movement while saying this are in italics and parenthesis by each phrase]

In the name
of the Father, *(with the right hand, touch the forehead)*

and of the Son, *(touch the chest)*
and of the Holy Spirit. *(touch the left then the right shoulder)* Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Our Father, *Pater Noster*)



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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.

Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*)

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you (thee);

blessed are (art) you (thou) among women,
blessed is the fruit of your (thy) womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be (*Gloria Patri*)

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.

Key Element V: Education for Living in the Christian Community - How We Live in the Community, the Church

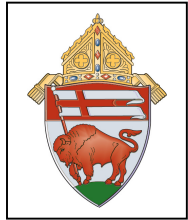
“We were created as social beings who find fulfillment only in love – for God and for our neighbor. If we are truly to gaze upon him who is the source of our joy, we need to do so as members of the people of God (cf. Spe Salvi no. 14). If this seems counter-cultural, that is simply further evidence of the urgent need for a renewed evangelization of culture.” (Benedict XVI – 16 April 2008 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception)”

At-Home Ideas:

At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Education for Living in the Christian Community** in your home: *Living Christian community life does not happen spontaneously, it must be taught carefully (GDC, 77). Children are like apprentices learning at the feet of the master carpenter, Christ, who has shared this task with parents. Parents model the Christian virtues to their children and how to act in public settings with love and compassion.*

Standard 8 CATHOLIC CHURCH: Understand and appreciate the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, the community of believers, as expressed in the Church's origin, mission of evangelization, hierarchical structure, marks, charisms, members and the communion of saints.

- Identify the **Church** as a community of those who believe in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who become members of that community through the **sacrament** of **Baptism**.
- Illustrate ways the parish is a community.
- State that the **church** is a place where people gather to praise, thank and worship God.
- Show understanding that the Church is God's special family.
- Identify the Sacrament of Baptism as the way in which we share in God's own life and become **members** of the Church.
- State that we learn about God through the Church.
- Identify the name **Catholic** as the name of the Church of which we are members.
- State that Jesus Christ established the **Church** and commanded his followers to help the church grow.
- Name the Holy Spirit as God's Spirit helping the Church to grow and to serve the world.
- State that Jesus gave the Church the **mission** to spread to all people the message of God's love.
- Retell stories to show that the Church has many holy people some of whom are called **saints**.



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Standard 9 **ECUMENISM:** Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with other Catholic (Eastern), Orthodox, and Christian churches.

- Understand that Jesus founded the Catholic Church.**
- Recognize that we are Catholic Christians.*
- Understand that other [Christians](#) share a common [baptism](#) and belief in Jesus even though they do not share everything that Jesus taught us.**
- Know that Jesus prayed that we might all be one so that the world might believe that he was sent by the Father. (Jn 17:20-23)*

Standard 10 **CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES AND RELATIONSHIPS:** Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations.

- Discuss that all persons are "created in God's image."**
- Give examples of how parents are role models in a Christian family to be loved and obeyed like Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph. (Luke 2:51)*
- Show how we love and respect our family.**
- Explain how parents, brothers and sisters can also be friends.*
- Define [womb](#) as a special place where a baby grows.**
- Discuss that we treat others the way Jesus would have treated them.**
- Distinguish between respectful touches and disrespectful touches.** *(Also see Virtus Teaching Touching Safety Program materials)*

Standard 11 **VOCATION:** Understand and undertake discipleship in Christ responding in faith by participating in the mission of the Church through living a specific call in the life of the Church.

- Examine a variety of Christian [vocations](#) as a response to the [baptismal call](#). Show understanding that God calls us as his own to be loved and to love.**
- Show understanding that God calls us as his own to be loved and to love.**
- State that marriage is a [vocation](#) between a man and a woman.**
- Show understanding that the Church has special ministers who serve others.*
- Identify the priest as an [ordained](#) minister of the Church who has a special role of leading people in prayer.**

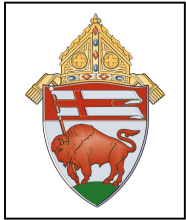
Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life

– How we, as Individuals and Community, Live in Service to the World

“Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family as his sons and daughters, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God.” (Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, no. 78)

At-Home Ideas:

At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Evangelization and Apostolic Life** in your home: *Parents influence children through the witness of their lived faith expressed in integrity and service. Children are made aware of service and Catholic social teaching through inclusion in service projects when possible. Issues related to justice, peace, respect for life, and other moral issues are discussed routinely around the dinner table or elsewhere at a level understandable to the primary-age child. To make service projects more meaningful for primary children, it is useful to help them process the experience. These projects teach children to think of others and prepare them for serving/ evangelizing others through word and action.*



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Standard 12 CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Know critique and apply social justice and stewardship principles to societal situations in a way that acknowledges and affirms the dignity of the human person and community.

- State that Jesus shows us how to live.**
- Understand that we care for the poor and the suffering.*
- Recognize that God has entrusted to all human beings responsibility for the world and all its creatures.**
- Participate in age appropriate activities that show respect for life.*
- We are called to be helpful and loving to our parents, brothers, sisters, friends and teachers.**
- Know that as Catholics, we promise to take care of all God's creation.**

Standard 13 INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with Jews, Muslims, and all faith traditions.

- Understand that many people believe in God even though they are not baptized and know that God loves them.*
- Show understanding that God loves and cares for all people and we should, too.**
- Understand that we care for all people of different cultures and races at every stage of life.**
- State that Jesus was a Jew who lived and carried out his mission within the Jewish culture and tradition.**
- Show awareness that I have neighbors who know about God in different ways than I do.*

Standard 14 MISSIONARY VOCATION: Demonstrate an appreciation for Catholic missionary and evangelization efforts through our parish community, its culture, worship, sacramental life, and service.

- Understand that we are called to share our story of faith in Jesus and invite others to come to know and love him as we do.**
- Tell that God created each person to love him and to love others.**
- Show how we are all disciples of Jesus.*
- Recognize that God gave all of us gifts to share with others.**
- Identify ways our parish shows its Christ-like service to others.*
- Hear stories about lay missionaries, priests, brothers and sisters.*
- Describe ways you can help a new child in your class or a new baby in your family, feel welcome.*
- Recall news of the day that shows service to others*

The most important task of the catechesis of children is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith. (NDC, no. 205)