



Parents' Guide to Diocesan Faith Formation Curriculum
Grade 3

'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?

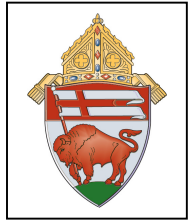
- **Core items that must be covered in all parish and school programs are in bold print.**
- *Enrichment items that are optional and can be covered if there is time are in italics.*

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:

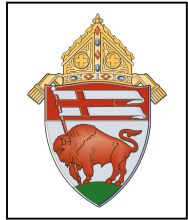
At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Knowledge of the Faith** in your home: Parents of primary-grade children provide the most powerful influence on forming the faith of their children by living out their own faith 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.

- Identify the **Holy Trinity** in the **Apostles' Creed**.
- State understanding of the meaning when we say, “I believe in **one God**.”
- Demonstrate understanding that God the Father loves us as a good and loving parent.*
- Exhibit how God wants our love as a response to his love.
- Identify **Jesus Christ** as **Savior** and **Redeemer**.
- Identify that God’s Holy Spirit lives in me and **inspires** me to do what is good.
- Exhibit understanding that we experience God’s forgiveness when we are sorry for our **sins**.
- Recognize God as **Judge** who asks us to account for how well we obey his commands.
- State the meaning of Jesus’ **Resurrection**.
- Exhibit understanding that we are meant for **heaven**.*

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

- Identify the Bible as a collection of sacred books that reveals God’s Word to us.
- State that the Holy Spirit **inspired** people to write the Bible.
- Name the Old Testament and New Testament as the two major sections of the Bible.
- Identify first book of the Old Testament as the Book of Genesis.
- State that the Old Testament books tell us about God as Creator and Protector.
- Compare and contrast the choices of **Cain** and **Abel**—the sons of Adam and Eve. (Gn 4)*
- Identify the story of **Noah** and God’s promise to Noah. (Gn 6-11)*
- Identify the **Tower of Babel** in the Book of Genesis as a story about the beginning of cultures and languages. (Gn 11:1-9)*
- Identify **Abraham** as the father of our faith in God. (Gn 12ff)
- State that the New Testament is about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the early church.
- Identify Jesus as teacher and healer in the Gospels.*
- State meaning of **Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven** in the Gospels.*



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- Identify the **Our Father** (the Lord's Prayer) as the prayer of Jesus in the Gospels.

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.

- Describe the sacraments as gifts Jesus gave us to meet him and to grow in our love and likeness of him.
- Describe how **Sacraments of Initiation** help Christians to live a life centered on Jesus.
- Identify the Sacrament of the **Eucharist** as the means Christ has chosen to remain in our midst physically.
- Describe examples of **adoration** of Jesus in the **Blessed Sacrament** outside of Mass.
- Identify and describe the **Sacraments of Healing** as **Penance/Reconciliation** and **Anointing of the Sick**.
- Identify and describe the **Sacraments at the Service of Communion** as **Holy Orders** and **Matrimony**.
- Define **sacramental** and give examples such as rosaries, crucifixes, medals of saints.

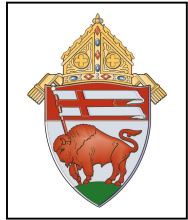
Standard 4 LITURGY: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the liturgy year and epitomized in the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life.

- Define **liturgy** as the celebration of the work of Christ to accomplish our salvation through his life, death, and resurrection so that the assembly gives praise and thanks to God the Father in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit.
- Identify symbols of the Eucharist as the consecrated bread and wine.
- Describe the roles of the priest, **deacon, lector, ministers of Holy Communion** and **acolytes** at Mass.
- Explain the major seasons of the liturgical (church) year: **Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time, Triduum (3 days in honor of the Paschal Mystery)**.
- Identify and describe the major parts of the Mass: **Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Closing Rite**.
- Identify major tenets of faith found in the Creed.

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)



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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.

- Define **Morality** as referring to the goodness or evil of human acts.
- Define **obedience** and state its relationship to the **Ten Commandments**.
- Explain obedience as an act of love.
- Explain that Jesus sums up the commandments for us in his **law of love**.

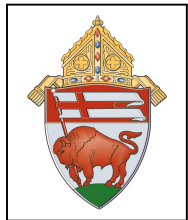
Standard 6 **Christian Living:** Understand and live the moral teachings of the Church through a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ expressed in love for God, conversion, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, the dignity of the human person and love of neighbor.

- Exhibit understanding that God created us as naturally good and destined for union with him.
- Give examples of the ways in which we might use our free will to love, honor, and obey God freely or choose not to follow God (sin).
- Illustrate that loving our neighbor as ourselves also includes speaking up for ourselves or others when we are being harmed (for example by disrespectful touching) and seeking help from parents or other adults when we need help.
- Demonstrate understanding that the **Two Great Commandments** encompass the **Decalogue**.
- Explain how one would imitate Jesus' example of how to love.
- Compare and contrast responsible and irresponsible stewardship of God's creation.
- State the meaning of **justice**.
- Define what **virtues** are and how virtues are acquired.
- Give examples of **virtues** in relationship to the Christian life.
- State how we live virtue in family life.
- Acknowledge and affirm the dignity of the human person and community.
- Participate in activities that show we care about people, especially those who are unable to help themselves, as a means of recognizing their human dignity.
- State that **Catholic Social Teaching** gives us basic ideas or principles that help us know how to live and treat each other and all creation in our personal lives and in the groups to which we belong.
- Explain that whatever we do for people in need, we do for Jesus.
- Understand that we share in Jesus' mission to bring a message of love, justice, and hope to the poor and victims of injustice.

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)



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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.

- Observe that God hears and answers our prayers.**
- Explain that listening to God's word in Scripture is a privileged way God speaks to us today.**
- Show the difference between spontaneous prayer and liturgical prayer.*
- Explain the Apostles' Creed as a prayer.**
- Describe prayer as talking to and listening to God.*
- Identify prayer as blessing, adoration, contrition, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise.**
- Write a prayer for the faithful departed.*
- Differentiate between private and public prayer.**
- Discuss various ways that families and people can pray together.*

Memorize and recite the elements of the Order of the Mass, especially the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Two Great Commandments and the types of prayer. *Please note that the full texts of these texts 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.*

Order of the Mass

Introductory Rites

- Entrance (with song)
- Veneration of the Altar and Greeting
- Penitential Rite or Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water
- Glory to God (*Gloria* - except during Advent and Lent)
- Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading (usually from the Old Testament or the Acts of the Apostles)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (from New Testament letters; not on a weekday unless a feast)
- Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia, except during Lent)
- Gospel Reading
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (Creed)
- General Intercessions

C) Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of the Gifts (with music or song)
- Eucharistic Prayer (with sung acclamations – Holy, Holy [Sanctus], Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen)
- Distribution of Communion (with song)

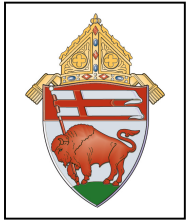
D) Concluding Rite

- Greeting
- Blessing
- Recessional (with song)

The Two Great Commandments (Lk 10:27)

- 1) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.
- 2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Types of Prayer – Identify prayer as blessing, adoration, contrition, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2626-2649.)



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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:

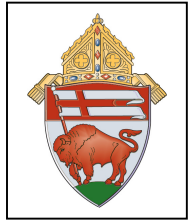
At the primary or early elementary school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Education for Living in the Christian Community** in your home: *Living Christian community life does not happen spontaneously, it must be taught carefully (GDC, 77). Children are 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 members of the Catholic Church as *Christians*.
- Identify that our church community includes the **Pope, bishops, clergy, religious and lay people**.
- State that Jesus Christ established the Church and is its head and that we are the **Body of Christ**.
- Identify the apostles of Jesus as the ones who led the early church communities.
- Identify that Jesus chose Peter as the leader of his Apostles to lead, teach and guide the Church and spread the **Gospel**.
- State meaning of **Communion of Saints**.
- Name the **Pope** as the **visible head** of the Church on earth and the successor of Peter.
- Identify the **bishops** as successors to the Apostles.
- Identify the birthday of the church as the feast of **Pentecost**.
- Explain that the Church continues the work of Christ on earth with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Demonstrate how the church continues Jesus' ministries of community, work, worship, and service.
- Discuss the responsibility of Catholics to financially support church ministries.
- Recognize the faith community as a way of coming to know God.

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.

- Name some other Christian communities or **denominations** (for example: Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian) that are in your neighborhood or near your parish church or school.
- Show awareness that we respect all faiths because God loves all people.
- Know when in the year Christians share prayer for unity (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 18-25 every year).
- State that our respect for other Christians and faiths does not mean we deny that the fullness of the faith Christ taught is found in the Catholic Church
- State that the Catholic Church works for the unity of all people to live in peace and justice.



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

- Realize that modesty shows respect for our own bodies and the bodies of others.**
- Recognize that all life is a gift of God which must be respected.**
- Recognize Jesus as the model of a how to treat others.*
- Understand that through the parables, Jesus taught us to love ourselves and one another.*
- Memorize "love your neighbor as yourself and love God with all of your mind, heart, and strength" (law of love).**
- Compare the law of love to the Ten Commandments.**
- Use the law of love to judge the decisions of people in the Bible stories, films, TV programs, stories, and songs.*
- Judge their own actions toward others as following or not following the law of love.*

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.

- Show understanding that Jesus called people to be his disciples.**
- Exhibit understanding that student desires to follow Jesus.*
- Describe [vocation](#) as a calling to serve others and examine a variety of Christian vocations as a response to the [baptismal call](#).**
- List marriage, priesthood, religious life, and single life as special vocations in the Church.**
- Understand that Holy Orders is a sacrament of special service and commitment to the Church.**
- Show understanding that parents have a vocation to serve God and the Church by helping their children to grow close to God.**
- Articulate that all people are called to holiness by living their lives close to God.**
- Examine a variety of Christian vocations as a response to the baptismal call.*

Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life

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

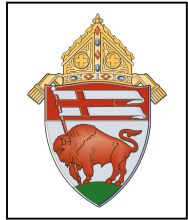
"Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God's family as his sons and daughters, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism 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.*

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.

- Explain how we show acts of love and kindness to others and to all God's creation.**
- Understand that God wants us to resist envy and greed*



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- State that the Beatitudes show us how to trust God, to forgive, and to have mercy for others.
- State that we show our love for God when we help those in need.
- Understand that caring for others means considering their needs.
- Realize that the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are ways of showing our love for Jesus who cares for the poor.

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.

- Identify Judaism as Jesus' faith.
- Understand that we respect people of all faiths because God loves all people.
- State that the Catholic Church works for the unity of all people to live in peace and justice
- Recall that Catholics are called to protect and promote the freedom of all people to practice their faith.

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

- Illustrate how you would share the story of your faith with others who may ask you about it.
- Report the meaning of the word **evangelization**: to proclaim Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of his command to go make disciples.
- Recognize that Jesus gave us the Catholic Church to live in a community of believers with him.
- Identify what Jesus asked His disciples to do for others.
- Give examples of the missionary work and zeal of St. Peter and St. Paul. (*Acts of the Apostles*)
- Realize that every Catholic is called to have a missionary spirit by engaging in age appropriate service and works of mercy (for example: fundraisers for missionary groups such as The Holy Childhood Association, Catholic Relief Services, etc.)
- Identify missionary orders (e.g., Medical Missionaries, Priests and Sisters of the African Missions, The White Fathers, etc.).
- Understand that we need to bear witness to our Catholic faith in our community and society.
- State names of our president and world leaders and pray that they are inspired by God to make wise decisions in favor of justice, peace, and equality.

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)