



Parents' Guide to Diocese of Buffalo Faith Formation Curriculum Grade 4

'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:

- Knowledge of the faith;
- Liturgy and Sacraments;
- Morality;
- Prayer;
- Education for Living in the Christian Community;
- 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 intermediate 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: *The willingness of parents to grow in their understanding of faith issues models for their children the belief that growth in faith is a lifelong process. Parents seek opportunities to share their faith with other adults as well as with their children. Parents take the time necessary to answer informal faith questions as they arise or research unknown answers with the child, using Scripture or the Catechism of the Catholic Church when appropriate. Families actively participate in the life of the parish.*

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.

- ☪ **Name God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**
- ☪ *State that although God is named Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God is neither male nor female.*
- ☪ *Distinguish the roles of the Holy Trinity: the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier.*
- ☪ **Identify Christian faith as Trinitarian.**
- ☪ **State the meaning and sources of revelation: Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, as entrusted to the teaching office of the Church.**
- ☪ **Articulate that God is faithful to his promises.**
- ☪ *Explain that God is described by many names.*
- ☪ **Describe Holy Spirit as proceeding from both the Father and Son as perfect love and wisdom.**
- ☪ *Describe God as loving and forgiving.*
- ☪ **Show understanding that God expects us to love and forgive each other. (See for example, Mt 6:14-16, Mt 18:21-22, Mk 11:25 and Lk 6:37)**
- ☪ **Describe what it means to be holy.**
- ☪ **Show understanding that God gives us the freedom to choose good over evil.**
- ☪ *Describe meaning of faith in my life.*

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

- ☪ *List the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.*
- ☪ **Describe the meaning of covenant in the story of Abraham.**
- ☪ *Describe meaning of patriarch.*
- ☪ **Exhibit understanding of how God’s promise was passed on to the descendants of Abraham.**
- ☪ *Name the three patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*
- ☪ *Identify the son of Jacob: Joseph.*
- ☪ **Identify Moses as a great prophet who received God’s covenantal promise and the law.**



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☩ he journey of the Israelites in the desert and God's leading them with care and love as their **Redeemer**.

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 this level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Liturgy and Sacraments** in your home: *Parents help to deepen their children's understanding of sacraments by regular and active participation in sacramental celebrations followed by conversation about the experience. Participation in communal celebrations of the Sacrament of penance and reconciliation and other opportunities for reconciliation and weekly Sunday liturgy are particularly important for the intermediate child and his or her family.*

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 each of the essential components of the Sacrament of **Penance/Reconciliation**.

☩ Identify and name **sacramental signs**.

☩ Demonstrate understanding that the **Eucharist** is the source and summit of the Christian life.

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.

☩ Apply the concept of the **Sabbath** in the Old Testament to Sunday for Christians.

☩ Identify the holy days of the church calendar and deduce that these are days of required attendance at Mass.

☩ Demonstrate how the life of Jesus is remembered in the **liturgical year**.

☩ Relate the Jewish feast of **Passover** with Jesus' last meal with his disciples

☩ Associate **ordinary time** with the teachings and public life of Jesus.

☩ Identifies and describes the days of the **Triduum** and their meaning.

☩ Identifies the parts of the Rite of **Reconciliation** and participates in a reconciliation service.

☩ Understand how to create and participates in the writing of prayers of intercession for Mass.

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 intermediate school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Morality** in your home: *Parents help their children learn to make right choices through dialogue about routine decisions. Respect and appreciation for ourselves and others are communicated when parents show respect and appreciation for their children. Participation in the responsibilities of family life teaches intermediate students the value of Christian service and a wholesome moral life. It can not be emphasized enough, that good moral and apostolic actions by the parents teach children how to act.*



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

- ⌘ Identify that it is the Holy Spirit and the Church that help us to choose what is right.
- ⌘ Define the theological virtues of [faith, hope, and love](#).
- ⌘ *Compare and contrast faith, hope, and love.*
- ⌘ *Recall that loving others as Christ does will make us truly happy, even if it is sometimes hard to love.*
- ⌘ Identify that God gives us gifts of [freedom](#) and [conscience](#).
- ⌘ *Identify the demonstration of faith, hope and love in [Scripture](#) (Old and [New Testaments](#)).*
- ⌘ **Memorize and recite the [Ten Commandments](#)**
- ⌘ *Understand that the Ten Commandments teach us how to love God and others.*
- ⌘ **Name the [Beatitudes](#) and their origin. (Mt 5:3-12)**
- ⌘ **Understand that [sin](#) is choosing to turn away from God, which harms our relationship with God, ourselves and others.**

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.

- ⌘ *Give examples of how the Beatitudes show us to trust God, forgive, and have mercy for others.*
- ⌘ **Identify the most important social teaching of the Church: dignity of the human person.**
- ⌘ *Acknowledge and affirm the dignity of the human person and community and how the dignity of the human person leads us to defend the [common good](#).*
- ⌘ *Give examples of how speaking up for ourselves or others when we are being harmed, or seeking help from parents or other adults when we need help, is a practical way to defend the [common good](#).*
- ⌘ **Illustrate a basic understanding of Church.**
- ⌘ *Understand that the Church is a light to the world.*
- ⌘ *Understand that the Church is called to be a community.*
- ⌘ *Understand that as members of the Church, we learn from others and teach others the way to the reign of God.*
- ⌘ *Understand that participation in our family and parish communities gives us support for living the Christian way of life.*
- ⌘ **Recall that the sacraments, especially [Reconciliation](#) and the [Holy Eucharist](#), help us to love and forgive others.**
- ⌘ *Understand that Mary and the saints offer us examples of good Christian lives.*
- ⌘ **Recognize the [Corporal](#) and [Spiritual Works of Mercy](#)**
- ⌘ **Understand that differences in personalities, races, and nationalities are good for the whole of the human family**
- ⌘ **Recognize that the teaching of the Church gives us principles in [Catholic Social Teaching](#) that apply to our own lives and how we live with others in our nation and the world**
- ⌘ *Understand that God wants us to resist envy and greed.*

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 this age, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Prayer** in your home: *Parents speak most clearly about the importance of prayer in life when their children see them pray. Your example speaks volumes that words can not match. The prayer life of children is enriched by praying at home and at regular parish celebrations of liturgy and sacraments.*

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.

- ⌘ **Indicate that Christians forgive those who hurt them and pray for everyone, the living and the dead.**
- ⌘ **Pray the Rosary as a special prayer that helps us imitate the lives of Jesus and Mary.**
- ⌘ *Describe the Rosary as a way we come to understand Jesus through the eyes and "school" of Mary.*
- ⌘ **Recognize that the mysteries of the Rosary are meditations on different events in the lives of Christ and his Blessed Mother.**
- ⌘ *Recognize prayer as an important part of leading a moral life.*
- ⌘ **Identify prayer as blessing, adoration, contrition, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise**
- ⌘ **Identify the [Nicene Creed](#) as the statement of beliefs we pray at Mass.**
- ⌘ *Write and recite a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving.*
- ⌘ **Explain the difference between [meditative prayer](#) (as a vehicle to think about the mysteries of our salvation in Christ) and [contemplative prayer](#) (as being with God like being with our best friend and simply enjoying his presence**
- ⌘ **Memorize and recite the Apostle's Creed.**

Nicene Creed [*Italics indicate new translation from the Revised Roman Missal*]

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake
he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day*

*in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life, who proceeds
from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets. And
one, holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to
the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*



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Praying the Rosary & Mysteries of the Rosary [CCC nos. 2678, 2708, cf. 1674]

- **Praying the Rosary**
 - a) Hold the crucifix and pray the Apostles' Creed.
 - b) Pray the Lord's Prayer when holding each single bead.
 - c) Pray the Hail Mary on each bead in a group of three or ten. A group of ten Hail Marys is called a decade of the Rosary.
 - d) After each group of Hail Marys, pray the Glory Be to the Father.
 - e) Close the Rosary by praying the Hail, Holy Queen.

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 intermediate 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: *Children are now capable of taking on more responsibility and ownership of their faith life while still needing clear guidance from parents. Allowing children to participate more fully in parish life and highlighting the ways that they live a virtuous life to them helps them to realize that they are blessed by God with gifts and talents to share with the large parish community.*

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 Catholic Church as the **assembly** of God's people.
- ✚ **Identify the Church as the People of God.**
- ✚ Examine the followers of Jesus who make up the church (apostles, saints, us).
- ✚ **Name the Pope as head of the Catholic Church.**
- ✚ **Recognize that the Church is hierarchical** (i.e., that there is a divinely given order of ministry and leadership in the church - the threefold order of Bishop, Priest and Deacon, with each having a special role).
- ✚ *Identify part of the Nicene Creed that describes the church as holy and catholic.*

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.

- ✚ **Explain that Jesus founded the Catholic Church that we might all be one so that the world may believe that the Father sent him. (Jn 17:20-23)**
- ✚ *State that the Catholic Church is a community of Jesus' followers.*
- ✚ *Understand that Catholics are called to work and pray for unity in the Church because Jesus also prayed "that they all may be one". (John 17:21-22)*
- ✚ **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.**



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- ⌘ Name some Eastern Catholic Christian Churches (For example: [Maronite](#), [Byzantine Ukrainian](#), etc.) that do share the fullness of all that Jesus taught us and accept the role of the Pope as the successor of St. Peter.
- ⌘ *Understand that other Christians share a common baptism and belief in Jesus even though they do not share the fullness of all that Jesus taught us (for example, regarding whether there are seven sacraments or the role of the Pope as successor of Peter in the Church).*
- ⌘ **Understand that there are many Christians who are baptized and have a common belief in God but do not share the same understanding of the role of the Pope as the successor of St. Peter.**

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

- ⌘ *Recognize that love of self and others is key to a relationship with God.*
- ⌘ *Identify a sense of personal goodness and self-worth as being responsible and loving.*
- ⌘ **Define human sexuality as a gift from God in which we share in God's creation.**
- ⌘ **Describe the nature of a relationship with God, ourselves, and others.**
- ⌘ **Understand that participation in family and parish communities gives us support for living the Christian way of life.**
- ⌘ *Explain that God cares deeply about how we treat others.*
- ⌘ **Understand that authority is necessary for human community.**
- *Explain that the differences in personalities, races, and nationalities are good for the whole of the human family.*

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.

- ⌘ **State the meaning of Christian [discipleship](#).**
- ⌘ *Define vocation as a call to serve in the Church.*
- ⌘ **Articulate how vocations are ways to holiness in life.**
- ⌘ **Identify vocations in the Church: marriage, priesthood, religious life, and single life.**
- ⌘ *Compare and contrast a variety of Christian vocations as a response to the baptismal call.*
- ⌘ **Understand that through baptism, Jesus calls us to live a life of service, welcoming, and helping others, especially those in need.**

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 this age, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Evangelization and Apostolic Life** in your home: *Children are learning to better articulate their faith. Ask your children good questions to help stimulate their thoughts. Ask them in simple ways to begin to integrate the faith life with their everyday life and examples of situations they may encounter with their family or friends. These questions help children see how faith impacts their life and equips them to share their faith in a normal and realistic manner.*



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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.

- ⌘ **Define human sexuality as a gift from God in which we share in God's creation.**
- ⌘ Identify a sense of personal goodness and self-worth as being responsible and loving.
- ⌘ Recognize that love of self and others is key to a relationship with God.
- ⌘ **Describe examples of how the Church cares for those in need and works to build a better world.**
- ⌘ **Understand that participation in family and parish communities gives us support for living the Christian way of life.**
- ⌘ **Recognize one's responsibility for stewardship as care for all of 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.

- ⌘ Identify the Jews as the descendants of Abraham who received the first covenant from God.
- ⌘ **Show understanding that Christians receive the blessings of the covenant God made with the Jews.**
- ⌘ Distinguish the Old Testament from New Testament.
- ⌘ Identify the first five books of the Old Testament as the Jewish Torah.
- ⌘ **Identify Jesus within the Jewish tradition.**
- ⌘ **Recognize the psalms as the prayers of Jewish and Christian people.**
- ⌘ State the importance of respecting the religious beliefs of others.
- ⌘ Identify Islam as a religion based on the Jewish and Christian belief in one God.
- ⌘ Recognize Muslims as those who [reverence](#) God and who adhere to the religion of Islam.
- ⌘ **Explain the importance of religious liberty in our society**

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

- ⌘ **Realize that Jesus calls all who follow him to “Go and make disciples.” (Mt 28)**
- ⌘ *Give an example of how you would evangelize.*
- ⌘ *Realize that Jesus gave us the Catholic Church to support and guide the way to true freedom and happiness.*
- ⌘ **Describe what disciples of Jesus do to imitate Him.**
- ⌘ **Explain Jesus as the [Prince of Peace](#). (Is 9:6; Lk 2:13-14)**
- ⌘ *Discuss the responsibilities of Catholics to discover ways to financially support missionary work.*
- ⌘ **State the ways people care for God's creation.**
- ⌘ *Understand world hunger, world peace, human rights, and sacredness of life.*
- ⌘ **Define [evangelization](#) as proclaiming Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of his command to go make disciples.**

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)