



Parents' Guide to Diocesan Faith Formation Curriculum PreK

'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 Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Knowledge of the Faith** in your home: Children are made by God to love and receive love. This is the first order of catechesis, an education in love. Parents also stimulate awareness, awe, and joy for life in the preschool child through nurturing loving relationships and experiencing life's precious moments together. Noticing the beauty of God's creation in nature and exposing children to religious symbols can be particularly illuminating.

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.

- ☞ Know that God is the **Holy Trinity** – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and that we demonstrate this belief when we make the **Sign of the Cross**.
- ☞ Show understanding that God created me and loves me.
- ☞ Describe how God made all creation good.
- ☞ Identify the universe as belonging to God.
- ☞ Describe God as Father.
- ☞ State that Jesus is: true God and true man, Son of God and Son of Mary. Retell stories about important moments in the life of Christ.
- ☞ Describe that Jesus died on the Cross for us, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven.

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

- ☞ Show understanding that the **Bible** is a very special holy book of the family of the Church.
- ☞ Identify the **Bible** as the book where we learn about how God created all that is.
- ☞ Identify the **Bible** as the book that contains the four Gospels – important books where we learn about Jesus.
- ☞ State the names of **Adam** and **Eve** as the names of the first man and the first woman created by God.

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 Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Liturgy and Sacraments** in your home: *Parents teach young children the meaning of family and ritual.*



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Participation in family rituals (such as bedtime rituals, family prayer, seasonal celebrations, etc.) by preschoolers forms the basis for their future understanding of worship. Attending Mass with your child is an excellent opportunity to teach them about the various religious signs and symbols.

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.

⌘ Exhibit basic understanding that **sacraments** are **signs** of God's love for us.

⌘ Learn about **Baptism** as the sacrament through which we become children of God and members of the family of the Church.

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.

⌘ Shows basic understanding that in the Church we believe God is present in a real way in those gathered (the **assembly**), in the Word of God and in the **Eucharist**.

⌘ Identify Sunday as a special day when we go to church and pray as a family

⌘ Demonstrate respect for God's presence in the Eucharist (or in the tabernacle) by **genuflecting** or bowing.

⌘ Identify **Christmas** and **Easter** as celebrations during the church year.

⌘ Give examples of ways we use our senses to help us pray.

⌘ Celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus.

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 Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Morality** in your home: *Parents help children to learn to love as Christ loves. This moral formation begins in the home through parental age appropriate example and through opportunities to teach young children the difference between right and wrong. Even at this young age, children learn there are consequences to their actions for good or for ill.*

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

⌘ Identify visual representations of Jesus' loving actions.

⌘ Imitate Jesus' actions 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.

⌘ Distinguish between right and wrong.

⌘ Learn that we need God's grace to live as his children.

⌘ Know that it is important to be fair and just, because that is how Jesus has taught us to be to one another.

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 Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Prayer** in your home: *Families pray simple prayers with children and establish patterns of prayer that are comfortable for them as a family. Spontaneous prayer, meal prayers, bedtime prayers and prayers at special family times are all excellent ways to introduce prayer to the preschool child. At this young age, teaching children rote prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be are learned through repetition.*

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.

- ⌘ Describe how prayer is talking to God as a loving Father.
- ⌘ Recall that Jesus helps us to pray.
- ⌘ Identify prayer as the way we show we love God.
- ⌘ Realize that songs can be prayers.
- ⌘ Pray before meals and give thanks to God.
- ⌘ Follow and recite the Sign of the Cross and the Glory Be.
- ⌘ Show respect for the names of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit, in speech and when using these names in prayer.
- ⌘ Repeat the prayer to the Guardian Angel.

Key prayers to be introduced:

Grace before and after meals

Before

Bless us, O Lord,
and these Your gifts,
which we are about to receive
from Your bounty,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

After

We give you thanks,
almighty God,
for these and all Your blessings which we
have received
from your bounty,
through Christ our Lord. Amen

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.

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.

Angel of God (Prayer to the Guardian Angel)

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. 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)”



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At-Home Ideas:

At the Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the *Education for Living in the Christian Community* in your home: *Parents model community life to their young children through active participation in parish life. Even simply actions, like talking to the priest and other parishioners after Mass, show children the value of community life. Setting aside time to be with preschoolers to share the events of the day, to hug them, and carefully listen to them are some ways parents nurture the faith of the child by being models of loving service and care.*

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 special community of faith that comes together to worship God.
- ☞ Identify that the **angels** are spirits who have been created by God to be his messengers, and that God has given each of us a **Guardian Angel** to watch over and protect us.
- ☞ Identify the saints as God's special friends who are part of the family of the Church in heaven.

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 and prayed that we might all be one (Jn 17:20-23).

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

- ☞ *Know that we love our families.*
- ☞ **Recognize that we love our neighbors.**
- ☞ *Understand that we should share with others.*
- ☞ **State that Jesus taught us to care for other people.**

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.

- ☞ **Know that priests serve God in a special way.**

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 Pre-school level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of *Evangelization and Apostolic Life* in your home: *An apostolic life is passed on in its practice. A sense of security and trust in the home are also of vital importance as a basis upon which faith builds. It is from this basis of love and trusts that children will later in life acquire a desire to reach out to others to share their faith.*

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.

- ☞ **Recognize that our individual differences are gifts from God.**
- ☞ **Know that all of God's creation needs care.**



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- ⌘ *State that our parish family works together to care about our world and other people.*
- ⌘ **Understand that Jesus showed concern for all people, especially those in need.**
- ⌘ *Learn the importance of sharing faith and other things as well.*

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 you belong to the Catholic Church founded by Jesus.**

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 asks us to share the Good News of Jesus' love for us with our family, friends and neighbors.**
- ⌘ *Help new classmates feel welcome.*
- ⌘ **Recognize that Jesus wants us to help our family and friends.**

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)