

# HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



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Dear Elementary Catechist,

Included in this document are information and resources to use throughout the year. For the centralized program catechists, a document titled "Centralized Program: Catechist Information" is included.

*Catechesis on Morality and Healthy Relationships:*  
Please refer to the Catechesis on Human Sexuality.

*Syllabus:*

We ask that each Neighborhood Group and Home School Family create a syllabus that is distributed to each family involved (NG) and the Faith Formation Office. A syllabus helps to provide organized communication with parents and the Faith Formation Office. There are example syllabuses in this section. There is also a copy of the Centralized Program's general syllabus to reference which chapters to cover. Included in your catechist folders (given out with your materials) are two Evaluation forms. Each Neighborhood Group/Home School Family will need to turn these in twice a year at the stated dates evaluating each semester of the year in reference to the Neighborhood Group/Home School Family's syllabus. Also included are separate attendance records for the Neighborhood Groups that will need to be turned in twice a year as well.

*Neighborhood Groups:*

Because of the difficulty in regularly communicating with catechists, I ask that you CC me on any communication you send to parents as a catechist of your Neighborhood Group. This keeps me up to date on things happening in your group.

It is my hope to attend one session of as many neighborhood groups as possible this year. Please email a couple of possible dates to me (or include them on the syllabus) to attend a session for your group. I merely come in to say "hi" to the group and observe the learning environment.

If you need any assistance in planning your classes or handling special situations, feel free to contact me in the parish office.

God bless,

Ricardo Valdez  
Director of Faith Formation

## THE GOALS OF CATECHESIS

In the catechesis of intermediate grade children, ages 9-11, the six tasks mentioned earlier are presented in specific and age-appropriate ways. It is around the six tasks of message, community, worship and prayer, service, moral formation, and the missionary initiation that the objectives for the systematic catechetical program are focused.

### **1. Word or Message**

**Objectives: the children will understand and experience that:**

- God is revealed in Sacred Scripture.
- The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) express the faith of the Israelite people.
- The Christian Scriptures (New Testament) express the faith of Christians, the followers of Jesus.
- The Bible is the Word of God written by people of faith. .
- The prophets brought God's message of repentance to God's people.
- God made a covenant with God's people Israel.
- God's covenant is also with us through Jesus.
- The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus form the basis of our faith.
- The parables and teachings of Jesus tell us how to live as Christians.  
(For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #105-108, #124-126, #288, and #709)
- God is active in our world.
- Our Church celebrates Seven Sacraments to help us remember how God is present in our lives at special and important times:
  - Baptism (becoming children of God)
  - Confirmation (the fullness of the spirit)
  - Eucharist (the nourishment of Jesus' love)
  - Penance (forgiveness)
  - Marriage (commitment)
  - Holy Orders (commitment)
  - Anointing of the Sick (Christian hope in eternal life)
- Each of the sacraments has symbols that help us understand its meaning.
- The sacraments are usually celebrated during Mass and use special rituals which also help us understand. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1210, #1666)
- The Ten Commandments .
- The Beatitudes (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1716, #2052, #2550)

## 2. Worship and Prayer

### **Objectives: the children will understand and experience:**

- The liturgical seasons and their meaning: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time.
- The Easter Triduum as the central celebration of the Church. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1168, #1171)
- Ways to plan prayer experiences, liturgies, and sacramental celebrations.
- Participation in the Liturgy of the Word: how to proclaim scripture, how to design and read prayers of petition, how to listen and respond.
- The prayers, rituals, gestures, and responses in celebrating entire Eucharistic Liturgy.
- The Liturgy of the Hours.
- The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds.
- The meaning and practice of Rosary devotions; Marian Devotions- Sacred Heart, Immaculate Heart
- Guardian Angels
- The Holydays of the Church.
- Varieties of prayer in addition to formal ones: personal, group, meditative, spontaneous, reflective, verbal, silent. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references #2655, #2665) .
- The seven sacraments and their place in our daily lives.
- The meaning of sign and symbol in celebrating the sacraments as symbolic actions of the total church.
- .A deeper understanding of the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1210-#1666)

## 3. Service and Christian Living

### **Objectives: the children will understand and experience that:**

- The message of the prophets was to keep God's covenant.
- Helping and serving others is a response to God's love for us.
- We are called to service by our Baptismal commitment.
- The Catholic Church's teaching on justice, mercy, peace, and social issues comes from the message of Jesus in the gospels.
- We help and care for those less fortunate than we are: the disabled, the poor, the homeless, the hungry.
- We treat all people fairly regardless of their race, color, gender, or income. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1928 and #1933)

## 4. Community

### **Objectives: the children will learn and experience that:**

- We are members of the Catholic Church. Because we follow Jesus Christ, we are Christians.
- The Mystical Body of Christ- many members, one function. We all have different gifts, but are One Body.
- Our Church leaders help to guide us and teach us to be like Jesus.

- With the help of Pastoral Associates and Pastoral Life Directors, our Pastor leads our parish.
- Our Cardinal Archbishop leads our Archdiocese.
- The Pope leads the Catholic Church.
- Our Catholic Church community teaches us about God's love. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #737, #738, #833, and #834)
- We are called to invite others to learn about our faith.
- We welcome and include others in our Church through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- The sacrament of Baptism brings us into the Catholic Church as members of God's family.
- Confirmation helps us grow in faith through the Holy Spirit.
- Eucharist is the presence of Jesus in our parish community through Word and Bread.
- Our parish community gathers each week to worship and thank God at Mass. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #833, #871, and #781)

## **5. Moral Formation**

### **Objectives: the children will understand and experience that:**

- The message of Jesus is to love God and one another.
- The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes show us how to live good lives.
- People we love and respect, the laws of our country, the Ten Commandments, the message of Jesus, and our church all help to teach us what is right or what is wrong.
- When we sin we, deliberately choose to do what we know is wrong.
- Sin is the breaking- of a loving relationship with another person or with God.
- In the Sacrament of Penance we show sorrow for what we have done.
- In the Sacrament of Penance we experience God's forgiveness.
- The Sacrament of Penance call us to conversion. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1422, #1798, #1950, #1970, and #2033)
- Sin and grace

## **6. Missionary Initiation**

### **Objectives: the children will understand and experience that:**

- God calls us to be disciples in our world
- About the missionary nature of the Church
- Jesus is the model of love and service
- Vocations
- Our job is to spread the good news
- Learn the good in other religions (CCC #434,542,787,425,1816,618,243,725,1724,820-822, 1694,825,542-543,914, 916, 944-945)

## **THE DESIRED FAITH RESPONSE IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADE CHILD**

These older children, as they grow and develop physically and intellectually, will also be growing spiritually. Their faith response will be more easily articulated as they become more verbal and expressive. Their "skills" in describing and living out their faith will be more highly developed. While they are more ready to use traditional religious terminology in describing their experience of God, it is important to recognize that their own life experience will contribute greatly to how they come to express what they are being taught in a formal and systematic religious education program. It is also important to know that a desired faith response can be observed but often is not measurable.

As with all children, there is a great diversity in the developmental level of children in the intermediate grades. The catechists must always be sensitive to those children who do not yet have some of the skills and attitudes that others have achieved. Each child's unique gifts and abilities are appreciated and affirmed.

The faith response of the intermediate child will depend on many aspects of catechetical and spiritual formation over a period of time. These older children have had more time to hear about Jesus and God, to experience Church in their parishes and schools, to learn more about what we believe about God and our religious tradition that changes us and draws us to holiness. It is how we have come to know God through the holy and grace-filled people, places, and events of our lives that leads to an authentic faith response.

It would be reasonable to expect, however, that as a result of the catechetical experience the intermediate child will exhibit some aspects of the desired faith response in acquiring new skills and attitudes. These desired faith responses include but are not limited to the following skills and attitudes that describe some ways in which this can happen.

### **Skills:**

#### **Objectives: the children will:**

- know and explain the importance of the Bible in our Christian faith.
- understand and be able to describe the meaning of the faith of the Israelite people as presented in the Old Testament.
- be able to express in their own words Biblical concepts such as revelation, creation, covenant, the Exodus journey, and salvation.
- know the role of the prophets in salvation history.
- describe the major teachings of Jesus as presented in the New Testament through, parables, example, death, and resurrection.
- learn and be able to recite more complicated prayers such as the Profession of Faith and other liturgical responses such as those in the penitential rite, Glory to God and the "Holy, Holy".
- learn and use a wide variety of prayer options such as personal, group, spontaneous, meditative, written, and silent.
- understand and be prepared to use Catholic devotional prayers such as the Rosary.

- describe the importance of the Easter Triduum in our liturgical year.
- distinguish among other liturgical seasons and their connection with the seasons of the year.
- participate in all prayers, gestures, responses, and ritual actions in celebrating the Eucharistic Liturgy.
- demonstrate the ability to proclaim scripture, present prayers of petition, and participate actively in the Liturgy of the Word.
- with guidance, be able to plan and carry out prayer experiences, liturgies, and sacramental celebrations.
- learn and be able to state the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.
- understand the meaning and significance of the Ten Commandments in developing a moral response.
- begin to recognize the significance of the Beatitudes and Jesus' law of love.
- know and appreciate Jesus as one sent by God to show God's love for us.
- develop the ability to form a good conscience in order that they will make good moral decisions and choices.
- understand and celebrate the sacrament of Penance with a sense of authentic repentance, conversion, and reconciliation - an understanding of sin and grace.
- know the Seven Sacraments and be able to express in their own words the importance of the Sacraments in their lives and in the life of the Church.
- learn and understand what signs and symbols are used in sacramental celebrations and why.
- identify the levels of leadership in the Catholic Church structure.
- demonstrate an understanding of their role as members of the parish community of faith.
- begin to learn and to understand the Church's teachings on social justice.
- recognize the connection between the Church teachings and the Gospel message of Jesus to bring peace and justice to the world.
- participate in parish projects to assist people in need.
- learn the meaning of discipleship and vocation
- learn the missionary nature of the Church
- learn the good in other religions

### **Attitudes:**

#### **Objectives: the children will:**

- find in scripture models of faith who will be life-long inspirations for them.
- grow in their understanding of God's covenant love.
- grow in their understanding of their part in the covenant relationship with God.
- appreciate, read, and pray the Bible.
- acknowledge the Bible as written and read by people of faith to help them know more about God.
- express in language, art, music, or gesture the meaning of God's presence in their everyday lives.
- discover how new ways of praying help them to respond more authentically to God's presence in their lives.

- internalize the meaning of the Ten Commandments as a guide for moral living.
- find ways in which they can live out Jesus' law of love in their own families, schools, and communities.
- respond to God's call to repentance and conversion by an increasing awareness of right and wrong.
- choose the "right" or moral responses in making moral decisions.
- understand God's forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance.
- participate more fully in Eucharistic Liturgies.
- begin to recognize and appreciate the different signs and symbols of God's presence in Sacramental celebrations.
- understand and appreciate ways in which the Seven Sacraments make special events holy in the lives of Catholic Christians.
- participate in projects that contribute to peace and justice in their neighborhood, city, or world.
- carry out service projects that help and assist those in need..
- respond to invitations to participate and assist in parish events that are offered for all age groups.
- respect and honor those in parish ministry.
- appreciate the hierarchical structure of the Church as guided by the Holy Spirit.
- grow in appreciation of their Catholic roots and practices.
- exhibit curiosity and ask questions about their faith tradition.
- grow in appreciation of the good in other religions.
- understand that God has a plan for them in this world - now and in the future.
- begin to tell others about the good news and goodness of Jesus Christ

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Goals of Catechesis</b> <b>Ages 6-8</b></p>
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The primary years provide opportunities to begin to attempt to accomplish these tasks or goals through the formal catechesis that is offered these young children. The following concepts are among to those presented to primary age children. The formal catechesis includes but is not limit to these concepts.

### **1. Word or Message**

**Objectives: the children will understand and experience that:**

- God is the creator of all that is good.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to live in peace. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #295, #299, #525, and #733)
- The Church consists of people who love and care for each other.
- Our church has good leaders: the Pope, the bishops and priests, Pastoral Directors and Associates, and ordinary people.
- The Bible is a special book that was written by people who loved God.
- The Bible helps us to know about God's love for us.
- The Bible tells us about God, Jesus, and people of faith.
- The Bible has two parts: the Old Testament (about God's people) and the New Testament (about Jesus).
- We read from the Bible at Mass. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #81, #98, and #105).
- Death is the beginning of new life with God.
- After we die we will live with God forever. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references: #1010, #1020).
- We honor Mary, the mother of Jesus, because she shows us how we can love Jesus too. (For further clarification see CCC #1655).
- The saints are special people who can teach us how to be good. (For further clarification see CCC #2030).

### **2. Worship and Prayer**

**Objectives: the children will learn and experience:**

- The Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Sign of the Cross, and other formal prayers.
- Spontaneous prayer.
- Quiet, reflective prayer.
- Mass, or Eucharistic Liturgy, is a time on Saturday or Sunday when we all come together to praise and thank God. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references #2598, #2655, and #2665).
- Our church celebrates God's presence at special times in our lives.
- Sacraments are celebrations that help put us in touch with God.
- Some of the sacraments take place at special times when friends and family gather at church to welcome a new baby to the parish, celebrate a wedding, meet Jesus in the bread and wine, or say they're sorry for hurting God or each other.
- Baptism brings us into the family of God.
- Penance shows God's loving mercy and forgiveness.
- Eucharist is Jesus who comes to us in a unique way in the bread and wine at Mass.
- Confirmation helps us share what we have learned about Jesus' love. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references, # 1210 -#1666).
- Lent is a time when we prepare for Easter.
- At Easter we celebrate the new life of Jesus when he rose from the dead.
- Easter is a time of new life in the church when many people are baptized.

- Advent is a time when we prepare for the birth of Jesus.
- Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus.
- On Holydays we honor the saints and celebrate special events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. (For further clarification of this section, see CCC references #1167, 1171).

### **3. Service or Christian Living**

**Objectives: children will understand and experience that:**

- Jesus teaches us how to be loving people.
- God's commandments teach us to love one another and to love God.
- Whenever we help other people we show our love for Jesus.
- We treat other people the way Jesus treated other people.
- We try to do things that are right because we know it's what God wants of us.
- Our church leaders teach us what is right to do also.  
(For further clarification of this section, see CCC references #544, #2044).

### **4. Community**

**Objectives: the children will learn, understand, and experience that:**

- The Catholic Christian church is a community of people who follow Jesus Christ.
- Catholics are God's people who live out Jesus' love in caring for each other.
- Our families show us that we are loved and cared for.  
(For further clarification of this section see CCC references #738, #834, and #1655).
- It is good to invite people to come to Mass with us.
- We pray for one another.
- We try to get to know people who are new in our neighborhood or school.
- The sacraments are celebrated at Mass, with people from our parish.
- We invite people to learn about our parish community.
- People who are different from us have much to teach us.
- We care for all of God's people.
- Jesus wants the church to include all people.  
(For further clarification of this section, see CCC references #833, #871, and #781).

### **5. Moral Formation**

**Objectives: the children will learn, understand, and experience that:**

- God calls us to goodness and glory.
- Sometimes we sin (fail to be good).
- God's grace, given to us through Jesus, will help us to be good again.
- We are responsible for making good choices.
- God forgives us when we say we are sorry.  
(CCC #2411, 1716, 1950, 2033)

### **6. Missionary Dimension**

**Objectives: the children will learn, understand, and experience that:**

- We need to respect and care for all of God's creation.
- God wants us to be fair and just.
- Jesus wants us to help the poor
- Jesus wants us to help out the Church when we grow up.  
(CCC #898-900, 2415-2418, 544, 244, 1807)

## THE DESIRED FAITH RESPONSE IN THE PRIMARY YEARS

We believe that faith deepens and matures as a result of many experiences in the lives of people. Formal, systematic, and intentional catechesis is merely one of the ways in which the faith life is nourished. However, it is reasonable to expect that out of the catechetical experience and the life experience within a loving community of faith some changes in attitude and behavior can evolve.

Primary age children are beginning to develop skills that are not necessarily "religious" or catechetical but which nonetheless can be applied to their growing awareness of God in their lives. These children are beginning to read, create, reason, and interact socially. The catechist will encourage the children to use these skills in activities that are connected with the faith life of the child. In other words, the child can respond in faith to the catechetical experience as it matches the life experience.

Catechesis, however, must always be sensitive to the child who does not conform to the group norm in the development of skills. Some children do not read by age eight. Some children cannot reason well yet. Some children have yet developed socially as far as others. On the other hand, some children are reading or reasoning far beyond their grade level, some are artistically gifted, some exhibit well developed leadership qualities. The catechist needs to be aware of each child's unique gifts, talents, and personality and will be the one who personifies God's love to all of the children.

A faith response is one that emerges from a combination of formal catechesis, life experience, and the grace of the Spirit. When they come together, attitudes and behavior change. God's presence is very real in the lives of primary age children, and they are capable of a faith response that cannot always be measured but often can be observed. (See Sofia Cavaletti, *The Religious Potential of the Child*, Liturgy Training Publications: Chicago, 1992. Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1990. Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*, Crown Publishers: New York, 1995).

It is clear, then, that as a result of the catechetical experience, primary children can be expected to respond in faith by learning new catechetical skills and by developing new understandings and attitudes. As with the content of formal catechesis, they include but are not limited to the following skills and attitudes that describes some ways in which this can happen.

### **Skills:**

#### **Objectives: the children will:**

- know and be able to recite formal prayers (Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Sign of the Cross, Creed).
- know how to pray both spontaneously and reflectively.
- learn how to forgive others
- know and be able to say some of the liturgical prayers and responses.
- be able to sing appropriate sung liturgical responses.
- behave appropriately at liturgical celebrations.
- learn and practice traditional Catholic behavior in church: blessing themselves with holy water, genuflection, kneeling, and the sign of the cross.
- begin to read from the Bible or children's lectionary.
- listen attentively when scripture is being proclaimed.
- understand the vocabulary used in formal catechetical sessions.
- be able to define some religious beliefs in their own words.
- present their ideas in writing.
- join enthusiastically in service projects.
- use appropriate forms of address for clergy and religious.

**Attitudes:**

**Objectives: the children will:**

- come to know, speak of, and pray spontaneously to Jesus as friend, brother, and God.
- articulate their appreciation for the goodness and beauty of creation and be able to thank God for all that God gives to us.
- express in spontaneous spoken or written prayer their thanks, petitions, praise, and contrition.
- express in language, art, gestures, or music an understanding of God's presence in their lives.
- exhibit at an age-appropriate level forgiveness, hospitality, cooperation, and kindness to others.
- help and assist those who have special needs.
- contribute to the peaceful atmosphere in the group.
- recognize the importance of treating others fairly and with respect.
- begin to understand the difference between right or wrong behavior and attitudes.
- begin to understand their responsibility in choose to do right or wrong.
- appreciate the good people in our lives who show us God's love.

## Weekly/Monthly Planning Considerations

<p><b>What is primary message of this lesson?</b></p> <p>Refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church to solidify your knowledge on the topic you will be teaching.</p> <p>Reflect on how this applies to your own life.</p> <p>Think about your learners. What is going on in their lives at school, home, in their activities? Connect how this message will affect their lives.</p> <p>Pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit as you begin to prepare for class. Pray for your learners.</p>	<p><b>What special prayer or ritual will you use with your group?</b></p> <p>Do you think your group will have difficulty grasping the content of this lesson?</p> <p>Develop a prayer/ritual which will relate to the message. Keep your learners and their needs in mind.</p> <p>Think of an object that might relate to your “message” for learners to take home with them. It could be a feather, stone, even a picture from a magazine.</p>
<p><b>How will the message relate to the different communities in which your learners live?</b></p> <p>Think about and name the communities with which your learners identify.</p> <p>What do you know about those communities? What are their strengths? Are there things these communities need?</p> <p>How will the message from this lesson connect with the needs of the communities? Find one concrete example of application for your learners.</p>	<p><b>How will you be ready to connect this lesson to the wider world and its needs?</b></p> <p>What connection can you make in your own mind? How can you make that same connection on the level of your learners?</p> <p>Why should they be interested in serving? Be ready with reasons.</p> <p>Be sure to remember to have students write down their commitment to service for the time until your next meeting.</p>
	<p><b>What is the result of your teaching this week?</b></p> <p>How are your learners closer to Jesus and his way of life?</p> <p>How are you closer to the Lord?</p> <p>How is the world a more loving place because of what happened in your group during this time?</p>

## Getting to Know You

example  
can give to parent  
to fill out for  
child

We will be praying during each of our classes. To make sure that we include any special topics or events that may be going on in the children's lives, there are a couple questions I wish to ask.

All the information provided will only be used in prayer during class. It will not be given to any other people or group within or outside our church. This is strictly for concerns to be brought before God in prayer during our class.

Thank you for your help.

1 Names of siblings and ages.

2 Do the siblings attend religious education the same day and time?

3 Is there any thing special going on with the family? (Anything good or concerning such as pregnancy, extended vacations, illness, etc.)

4 Is there anything special that we should know about the child?

5 Pets in the household?

6 Any allergy concerns not already noted?

7 Who will pick up the student after class? (Alternatives?)

NAME TAGS

duplicate this sheet on construction paper.  
put child's name on each.  
cutout. punch hole. put yarn through hole and around child's neck. collect each class.

Use until you know each child by name

School Subject  
I'm best in

my friends are...

favorite Hobby or  
free-time  
Activity

Name

What I want to  
do in Life.

Can do  
Back also...  
(Keep Positive)

E.g  
Soccer... include in  
future Teaching  
(compare/use Terms &  
Language of)  
favorite food