

Grade-Specific Religious Education *Curriculum* 2018



ARCHDIOCESE
of **MILWAUKEE**

To obtain additional information, please contact:

Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry

Office for Schools

3501 South Lake Drive • P.O. Box 070912 • Milwaukee, WI 53207
Phone: (414)-758-2242; (414)-758-2256 • Website: www.archmil.org

Introduction

In this document, the Grade-Specific Religious Education Curriculum for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is described for each grade level, 4-year-old preschool through grade 8. The curriculum identifies core religious education concepts for each grade level and expresses these in competency-based language.

The curriculum for each grade level is organized around four parts of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: *Creed* (What the Church Believes), *Liturgy and Sacraments* (What the Church Celebrates), *Moral Life* (How the Church Lives), and *Christian Prayer* (How the Church Prays). Scripture is integrated into all four areas of learning.

Creed refers primarily to doctrines, dogmas, and creeds. *Liturgy and Sacraments* refers to the sacraments, liturgical seasons, and feasts of the Church Year. *Moral Life* describes the moral values contained in the Commandments and Beatitudes, those major codes which guide the lives of Catholic Christians. *Christian Prayer* describes forms of prayer a child should know, experience, and/or memorize.

The characteristics of children at each grade level are included to emphasize the importance of age-appropriate curriculum.

It is our hope that this Grade-Specific Religious Education Curriculum provides concise descriptors that identify what is to be learned and lived as we share the treasure of our faith with our children on the life-long journey of being disciples of Jesus Christ.



Philosophy and Goals

| CREED |

We believe that the doctrine of the Church is articulated in its creeds. These truths we profess as Catholic Christians flow from Scripture and embody a rich Tradition passed down from the first followers of Jesus Christ. The Tradition is God's revelation through time. An understanding of these beliefs provides the foundation of a faith development for children.

Students will:

- Articulate basic beliefs of the Catholic faith.
- Know the history of the Catholic Church.
- Integrate knowledge of the Communion of Saints through understanding of Mary and the saints.
- Understand that the Church is the community of believers into which they are baptized and called to discipleship.

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

We believe as Catholic Christians that the Liturgical Year with its seasons and feasts celebrates God's presence in the cycle of human life. As a community of faith we are invited into the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.

Students will:

- Understand and live the communal nature of Church by participating in Sunday Eucharist.
- Participate in the sacraments meaningfully and freely.
- Recognize and celebrate the liturgical seasons and feasts.

| MORAL LIFE |

We believe we are called to a moral life that embodies Jesus Christ's example of faithfulness, forgiveness, compassion, justice, and service.

Students will:

- Make moral choices guided by the Commandments and the Beatitudes.
- Develop a conscience informed by knowledge of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.
- Be grounded in an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Grow in appreciation of the diversity of humankind, recognizing that all persons are made in the image and likeness of God.

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

We believe prayer is integral to the Christian life. It sustains and nurtures our relationship with God, enlightens our relationships with others, and provides a greater sense of well-being.

Students will:

- Express their innermost thoughts and feelings to God through prayer, both formal and informal.
- Value private and communal prayer.

| CREED |

- Learns God loves him or her
- Recognizes Jesus was part of a family with Mary and Joseph
- Identifies God as creator of the world and all living things
- Learns all people are God's children
- Is introduced to angels through Bible stories
- Knows we gather in Church as God's family
- Identifies the Bible as a book that has stories about God (Creation: Gn 1-2; The Birth of Jesus: Lk 2: 1-14)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Recognizes some Christian symbols; e.g., candles, water, cross
- Experiences Advent as a time of preparation and waiting for Christmas
- Recognizes Christmas as the birth of Jesus
- Recognizes that the story of Christmas tells about the birth of Jesus (Lk 2: 1-14, Mt 2: 7-12)
- Recognizes that the story of Easter tells about the resurrection of Jesus (Mt 26-28; Mk 14-16: 1-8; Lk 22-24: 1-12; Jn 13-20: 1-18)

| MORAL LIFE |

- Understands all God's creation needs care
- Learns that Jesus shows God's goodness
- Identifies saints as people who have a special love for God
- Knows that God loves each individual person
- Understands that God teaches us to love one another
- Recognizes the importance of sharing with others
- Understands helping others is a way to show love
- Recognizes the importance of saying, "I'm sorry"

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Identifies prayer as talking to God
- Recognizes God as creator
- Understands church is a special place deserving of respectful behavior
- Experiences different types of prayer; e.g., thanksgiving, petition, silence, praise, song
- Recognizes music and song as forms of prayer
- Knows prayer begins with the Sign of the Cross
- Recognizes different prayer postures
- Understands the Bible should be handled with special care

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A PRESCHOOL (FOUR-YEAR-OLD) CHILD |

- Sits still for a limited amount of time unless highly motivated
- Enjoys manipulative play and projects
- Is a sensory learner
- Is imaginative and creative
- Enjoys stories, rhyming, and nonsense songs and poems
- Can be aggressive and explosive due to emotional immaturity
- Likes to make choices and begins to see the wisdom of rules
- Is developing sensitivity to the feelings and attitudes of adults
- Needs experiences where he/she feels respected, is given freedom, and can succeed
- Needs to be affirmed when he/she shows kindness and friendliness
- Benefits from opportunities to practice thoughtfulness
- Lacks understanding of cause-and-effect relationships and intentional or unintentional actions
- Sees the world predominantly from his/her own point of view and developmentally is still very self-centered
- Needs encouragement to share possessions with others but does not want to be forced
- Enjoys celebrations and being part of a group
- Is capable of beginning to understand God's love by experiencing human love
- Benefits from experiences that can raise awareness and appreciation of God's creation
- Can use signs and symbols as a basis for liturgical awareness
- Needs to have demonstrated to him/her that God made each child unique and special
- Knows that prayer can be talking to God in his/her own words

| CREED |

- Learns God loves all people
- Recognizes all creation came from God's love
- Understands God's special gift to us is his son Jesus
- Learns that Jesus shows us how to love one another
- Is introduced to the Trinity as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- Learns the church is a special place for God's family
- Identifies saints as people who have died and are now happy with God
- Identifies angels as messengers of God; e.g., Shepherds and Angels (Lk 2: 8-20)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Recognizes that Christian symbols are used in prayer (water, candles, cross)
- Knows that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for Christmas
- Knows that Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus
- Experiences Lent as a special time of prayer and sacrifice
- Knows Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus
- Learns about some saints and their feast days
- Learns that through Baptism we become children of God
- Begins to say, "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" (as a foundation for later learning about Reconciliation)
- Is able to imitate gestures at Mass
- Recognizes that the story of Christmas describes the birth of Jesus and comes from the Bible (Lk 2: 1-14; Mt 2: 7-12)
- Learns about the story of the Last Supper
- Recognizes that the story of Easter describes the resurrection of Jesus and comes from the Bible (Mt 26-28; Mk 14-16: 1-8; Lk 22-24: 1-12; Jn 13-20: 1-18)

| MORAL LIFE |

- Understands God calls us to care for all of creation
- Knows that God's rules teach us to love one another
- Identifies that doing good is acting like Jesus
- Recognizes the need to respect all people
- Recognizes ways to respect and love others
- Practices ways to share with others
- Participates in helping and serving others
- Learns that saints lived God's love by showing concern for others
- Expresses thankfulness for God's love
- Demonstrates the ability to apologize appropriately
- Is familiar with the stories of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 30-37); Golden Rule (Lk 6: 31); Loaves and Fishes (Jn 6: 1-15; Lk 9: 12-17; Mk 6: 34-44; Mt 14: 13-21); Jesus Blessing the Little Children (Mt 19: 13-15; Mk 10: 13-16; Lk 18: 15-17)

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Participates in different forms of prayer; e.g., thanksgiving, petition, silence, praise, song
- Experiences talking to God through spontaneous prayer
- Experiences short periods of silence as a form of prayer
- Participates in the Sign of the Cross to begin prayer and memorizes the words and movements to the Sign of the Cross
- Shares in the rituals of prayer; e.g., before meals and bedtime
- Practices various hand postures in prayer
- Begins to learn the Our Father as the prayer Jesus taught us in the Bible

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A KINDERGARTEN CHILD |

- Learns through active involvement
- Learns through repetition and review
- Is curious and eager to learn
- Begins to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Listens and follows two- and three-step directions
- Is able to remain focused on tasks (15 minutes)
- Thinks literally
- Needs to feel that God made each child unique and special
- Needs to feel loved and accepted by others
- Needs individual attention and praise for accomplishments
- Desires to feel independent but needs support and guidance
- Begins to show concern for others
- Learns to show concern for others through role-playing and adult modeling
- Prefers social play
- Learns to cooperate in a group
- Needs reassurance of God's love through trust relationships with caring adults
- Needs a sense of belonging in the family, class and Church
- Has a sense of wonder about God's creation
- Shows thankfulness for God's creation
- Is ready for exposure to Scripture and a variety of prayer experiences

| CREED |

- Recognizes Mary's special role as Jesus' mother
- Learns God sent us Jesus to show us how to love
- Recognizes Mary, Joseph, and Jesus as the Holy Family
- Identifies the Trinity as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
- Begins to understand the Holy Spirit is with us and helps us to love God
- Learns we are part of God's larger family, the Church
- Learns about saints and their feast days
- Learns that every person has a Guardian Angel
- Recognizes God wants us to be happy with him in heaven
- Knows the Bible is the story of God and his people; e.g., Blessing the Children (Mt 19: 13-15; Mk 10: 13-16; Lk 18: 15-17); Easter (Mt 26-28; Mk 14-16: 1-8; Lk 22-24: 1-12; Jn 13-20; 1-18)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Continues to learn Christian symbols and sacramentals, such as ashes, palms, oil
- Recognizes important liturgical seasons, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter
- Celebrates some saints' feast days
- Recognizes the sacraments as special signs of God's love
- Recognizes that Baptism welcomes us into God's family, the Church
- Is able to recall the story of Christmas (Lk 2: 1-14, Mt 2: 7-12)
- Is able to recall the story of Easter (Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead)
- Learns about Jesus' Last Supper as foundation for later learning about the Eucharist (Mt 26: 17-29, Mk 14: 12-26, Lk 22: 7-20)
- Knows that God's family gathers at Mass to thank and praise God
- Joins in prayers at Mass; e.g., the Sign of the Cross, response prayers, Our Father

| MORAL LIFE |

- Demonstrates ways to care for others and creation
- Demonstrates ability to share with others
- Exhibits respect for various cultures, races, languages, and abilities
- Demonstrates service through organized activities
- Recognizes saints as people who model Jesus' love
- Understands the need for peaceful interactions with others
- Identifies the two Great Commandments Jesus gave: love God and love others as ourselves
- Identifies how he/she loves God, self, and others
- Recognizes that telling the truth is good and necessary
- Recognizes that choosing to break God's rules of love is sin
- Recognizes God created us able to choose to do right or wrong
- Knows the story of Creation (Gn 1-2)
- Recognizes stories of Jesus loving and helping people (Mk 8: 22-26, Lk 17: 11-19)

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Experiences prayer as both talking and listening to God
- Recognizes that the church building is a house of prayer
- Expresses love of God (praise) and personal needs (petition) in spontaneous prayer
- Is introduced to traditional prayers and devotions such as the Rosary and the Way of the Cross
- Memorizes and prays the Our Father and Glory Be to the Father (Doxology)
- Demonstrates different gestures/postures for prayer
- Recognizes common devotions and rituals: Advent wreath, holy water blessing, Rosary, and the Way of the Cross
- References the Bible as God's special book
- Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Our Father (Mt 6: 9-13, Lk 11: 1-4)
- Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- Is familiar with and articulates some stories of the miracles of Jesus

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIRST GRADE CHILD |

- Experiences being special
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to a family
- Appreciates and thanks God for the special gifts of the senses
- Recognizes that friends and family are special
- Helps others and is open to others helping them
- Experiences family rituals and activities
- Experiences forgiveness in daily life
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to the family of God
- Experiences going to church with family weekly
- Shows respect for others
- Begins awareness of social justice issues

| CREED |

- Understands Mary is the Mother of God and our mother
- Describes Jesus as the Son of God who shows us God's love
- Understands the Church models the way Jesus lived
- Knows the Church is built on the person and teaching of Jesus Christ
- Knows that Jesus died to save us from our sins
- Knows the Resurrection is God raising Jesus from the dead
- Retells stories of the lives of relevant saints
- Looks to saints as examples of heroes and heroines
- Knows that the Bible is made up of many books
- Knows that God speaks to us through the Bible
- Is familiar with The Good Shepherd (Jn 10: 1-18); The Great Commandments (Mt 22: 37-39)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Names the seven sacraments as special signs of God's love
- Knows the symbols of Baptism (water, candle, oil, white garment)
- Knows that Baptism and Eucharist are two Sacraments of Initiation
- Recalls and learns about one's own Baptism
- Knows the Sacrament of Reconciliation grants God's healing forgiveness
- Is prepared to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Recognizes the connection between the Last Supper and Mass (Mt 26: 17-19, 26-28)
- Recognizes that Eucharist is Christ's body and blood in the form of bread and wine; i.e., the real presence of Christ
- Knows the importance of gathering regularly with God's family at Mass to worship and ask for God's blessings
- Recognizes the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist as parts of the Mass
- Knows the practice of fasting one hour prior to receiving communion and the importance of being free from serious sin
- Is prepared to receive Holy Communion with reverence
- Can identify items found in a church worship space (including, but not limited to baptismal font, altar, chalice, tabernacle)
- Knows some elements of celebrating liturgical seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter (colors, Advent wreath, crib, fasting, almsgiving)
- Connects celebrations of the Liturgical Year with events in Scripture from Christ's life (Christmas, Lk 2: 1-14, Mt 2: 7-12; The Last Supper, Mt 26: 17-19, 26-28, Lk 22: 14-20; the Crucifixion, Lk 23: 33-49; Easter, Jn 20: 1-18, Lk 24: 13-35)

| MORAL LIFE |

- Expresses care for others and creation
- Chooses ways to share with others
- Models respect for various cultures, races, languages, and abilities
- Recognizes the need for outreach and service within the community
- Identifies the lives of saints as examples of how to live like Jesus
- Demonstrates basic peacemaking skills
- Understands that by being loving, kind, forgiving, and helpful, one is modeling Jesus
- Understands that love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor
- Distinguishes the difference between accident, mistake, and sin
- Understands that sin harms or breaks our relationship with God
- Describes sin as making deliberate choices not to love God, self, or others and recognizes our free choice to do right or wrong
- Recognizes that avoiding evil and choosing love forms our conscience
- Practices examining his/her conscience in preparation for Reconciliation
- Knows the Ten Commandments are God's laws that teach us to love God and others
- Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 11-24); the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Mt 18: 12-14, Lk 15: 3-7); Washing of the Feet (Jn 13: 1-17); the Ten Commandments (Ex 20: 1-17)

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Identifies prayer as raising one's mind and heart to God
- Is introduced to the presence of the Holy Spirit inspiring us in prayer
- Understands prayer as a daily practice
- Recognizes the importance of praying as a family
- Memorizes the Hail Mary and Act of Contrition
- Prays the Nicene Creed and Apostles Creed as a group
- Celebrates rituals, devotions, and activities; e.g., the Advent calendar, Jesse Tree, Easter symbols
- Identifies the Bible as God's special book and can share stories in it that demonstrate God's love

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A SECOND GRADE CHILD |

- Appreciates family members and recognizes one's uniqueness within the family
- Likes to participate and takes responsibility for his/her own actions as a member of a community (school, teams, groups)
- Experiences family activities and rituals
- Knows that he/she is special
- Experiences forgiveness in daily life
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to the family of God
- Experiences going to church weekly with the family
- Helps others and is open to being helped
- Can focus for longer periods of time
- Likes to help with some routine chores
- Enjoys family outings

| CREED |

- Describes God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Savior and Redeemer, God the Holy Spirit as Helper and Sanctifier
- Understands Jesus is our Savior and that “Jesus” means “God Saves”
- Describes Jesus’ mission as proclaiming the Good News and bringing about the Kingdom of God
- Understands in a simple way that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit
- Identifies the pope and bishops as leaders of the Catholic Church
- Understands in a simple way the Paschal Mystery and that Jesus died to save us from our sins
- Tells the stories of several saints and describes the qualities of the saints
- Names Jesus’ twelve apostles
- Knows Mary as the Mother of Jesus, as our mother, and as the Church’s model of faith and charity
- Recognizes that death will lead to union with God (heaven) or separation from God (hell)
- Knows that we become members of the Church through Baptism
- Defines the words/terms “creed” and “Communion of Saints”
- Identifies Biblical Citation as Book, Chapter, and Verse
- Begins to practice finding passages in the Bible
- Knows the difference between the Old and New Testaments
- Can give an example of Jesus’ miracles from Scripture; e.g., Wedding Feast at Cana (Jn 2: 1-11), Jesus Healing the Lepers (Lk 17: 11-19), Loaves and Fishes (Jn 6: 1-13), Walking on Water and Calming the Sea (Mt 14: 22-33; Mk 6: 45-51)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Describes the primary symbols/gestures of each of the seven sacraments
- Explains the seasons of the Liturgical Year
- Exhibits understanding of the Easter Season
- Recognizes Holy Days of Obligation as special days of celebration in the Church
- Experiences activities involved in the liturgical seasons and feasts
- Knows that the sacraments are signs of God’s grace given by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit
- Experiences Reconciliation as healing forgiveness
- Categorizes the sacraments into: Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing, and Sacraments at the Service of Communion
- Tells the stories of Jesus’ passion, death, resurrection; the Emmaus Story (Lk 24: 13-35), the Story of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-12)
- Knows the significance of God the Father as Abba, as addressed by Jesus in the Bible
- Knows the difference between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Mass
- Recognizes the essential importance of regular, active participation at Sunday Eucharist
- Identifies the different roles during Mass (priest, deacon, lector, servers, cantors, assembly, etc.)
- Describes the use of items found in a church worship space

| MORAL LIFE |

- Describes how sin hurts the whole community
- Introduced to and begins to understand the two pillars of Love in Action: Charity (direct service) and Justice (social change)
- Recognizes people who demonstrate stewardship in parish, community, and world
- Describes and shows evidence of what it means to be a peacemaker (opposes discrimination, bullying, prejudice)
- Recognizes the seven Corporal and seven Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Is familiar with the Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love/Charity as virtues of discipleship
- Knows the two Great Commandments
- Articulates a simple meaning of each of the Ten Commandments and gives examples of how to follow them
- Begins to recognize the difference between mortal and venial sin
- Describes God's grace as helping restore the damage of sin
- Knows that when we confess our sins, God forgives us

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Understands what rituals and devotions are and can provide examples of each
- Understands that we pray with the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Is able to pray daily and name the types of prayer
- Is introduced to the Stations of the Cross
- Is introduced to the Rosary
- Knows that prayer is vital to love for Christ and should be practiced daily
- Identifies and writes prayers of praise, thanksgiving, contrition, blessing, and petition (Prayers of the Faithful)
- Understands and prays prayers already memorized: the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Act of Contrition
- Prays the Apostles Creed as a group
- Memorizes the Hail Holy Queen
- Recognizes a Psalm as a form of prayer found in the Bible
- Is familiar with Jesus' teaching about prayer in the Scriptures; e.g., Mt 6: 5-15; Mk 11: 24; Lk 11: 1-13
- Identifies ways that God's creation can help us pray and connects creation to personal prayer experiences

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A THIRD GRADE CHILD |

- Expresses opinions and feelings about God and the Church.
- Enjoys Bible stories and stories about the lives of the saints
- Is becoming aware of the struggle between good and evil in the world and sometimes also in their own lives
- Prays in a way that may be self-centered but is sincere and offered in faith
- Shows a high level of energy and willingness to tackle almost anything
- Tends to be less cautious than younger children
- Begins to act more responsibly
- Begins to judge situations and considers what can happen to him/her
- Deepens understanding of forgiveness and healing
- Develops ability to feel empathy and compassion
- Displays considerable curiosity
- Shows increased self-confidence
- Develops close friendships
- Looks forward to school for social and academic reasons
- Wants to belong to a group
- Likes to read and write for pleasure and entertainment
- Needs supportive reinforcement from parents and other adults
- Experiences family rituals and activities
- Acquires computer skills and a developing understanding of technology
- Enjoys video games and other electronic entertainment

| CREED |

- Understands that God reveals himself gradually to us
- Describes the goodness of God's creation and how God cares for it
- Understands grace as a sharing of God's life
- Understands that "Incarnation" means that God became human
- Understands that Jesus lived, suffered, and died for us, and that we will rise with Christ to new life after death
- Understands that Christ's death and resurrection were part of God's plan
- Articulates that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide in making good choices
- Understands Church as a community of worship, witness, and service which carries on the work and mission of Christ
- Knows that the Trinity was fully revealed to Jesus' disciples at Pentecost
- Demonstrates how saints are models of love and mercy
- Understands that Mary is the Mother of God as she is the Mother of Jesus
- Understands that our faith is Trinitarian as expressed in Baptism
- Identifies various saints as role models of peace and love in the world and makes the connections between their stories and one's personal experiences
- Demonstrates the ability to locate passages in the Bible
- Understands that Scripture is God's word to us
- Understands that the story of Adam and Eve describes how our first parents sinned against God
- Is familiar with and able to describe the following Scripture passages about God's love for us, our love for others, and our need for mercy and forgiveness: Ten Commandments (Ex 20: 2-17); Beatitudes (Mt 5: 1-12); Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 25-37); Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 11-24).
- Knows the meaning of the covenant with Noah, Abraham and Moses (Gn 9: 1-3, 17: 1-9; Ex 19: 1-8)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Develops a deeper familiarity with the dominant symbols and gestures of the sacraments
- Has a growing understanding of the Liturgical Year and the symbolic colors of each season
- Names the Holy Days of Obligation
- Identifies the significance of practices involved in the liturgical seasons and feasts
- Understands that the sacraments are signs of grace and encounters with Jesus Christ
- Celebrates Reconciliation as a sacrament of conversion, God's forgiveness, mercy, and love
- Recognizes the value of and knows how to examine one's conscience
- Knows how to celebrate Rite I and II of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and can articulate the communal dimension of sin and forgiveness
- Expresses sorrow for sins in a prayer of contrition
- Celebrates the Eucharist as a sacrament of the Church's unity
- Knows the essential importance of regular participation in Sunday Eucharist, knowing that it is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery
- Explains the ways Christ is present at Mass

| MORAL LIFE |

- Recognizes conscience as the inner ability to judge between good and bad when making choices
- Identifies the seven Capital Sins
- Realizes that temptation is a pull toward something we know is sinful, and is a part of everyone's life
- Follows Catholic Social Teaching by reaching out to others through positive words and actions
- Defines holiness as the call of all Christians

- Describes the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as ways of responding to the needs of others
- Is introduced to the four Cardinal Virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude
- Can articulate the Ten Commandments using the traditional formula
- Knows Jesus' two Great Commandments of love are a Christian's way of life
- Responds to the Ten Commandments as rules to help us live God's life of love (Ex 20: 2-17)
- Learns the Beatitudes as a way of life modeled by Christ to bring happiness (Mt 5: 1-12)
- Realizes that original sin is the human condition into which we are all born
- Distinguishes between mortal (serious) and venial sin
- Recognizes the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is 11: 2)

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Is able to define the creeds as the statements of Catholic beliefs
- Can compare and contrast communal prayer and private prayer
- Distinguishes different types of personal and communal prayer
- Prays the Rosary as a group
- Understands that daily prayer connects us to and builds our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Understands and prays the following: the Our Father, Hail Mary, Act of Contrition, Glory Be, Hail Holy Queen
- Memorizes The Apostles Creed
- Is introduced to The Nicene Creed
- Prays using the Psalms
- Shows understanding of Jesus' Passion and Death through participation in the Stations of the Cross
- Engages in personal and communal prayer

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A FOURTH GRADE CHILD |

- Is growing in a personal sense of right and wrong that often expresses itself in judgments of what is "unfair" or unjust
- Begins to consider moral questions in terms of motives as well as consequences
- Enjoys participating in liturgies and prayer services
- May show increasing concern about people who are hungry, homeless, or poor
- Is becoming able to make up spontaneous prayers and litanies
- Demonstrates an interest in the wider world
- Grows in awareness of justice and fair play
- Exhibits awareness of self as an individual and as a member of a group
- Recognizes the need for guidelines and rules
- Acts more independently and confidently
- Begins to think of larger issues; e.g., environment, prejudice, violence, etc.
- Enjoys reading, listening to, and participating in stories as well as role playing
- Develops friendships with members of the same sex
- Learns from observations as well as direct teaching
- Is able to use technology to obtain information and to communicate with others
- Displays curiosity about life, nature, and people
- Desires to share and do things with others
- Develops an awareness that life requires making choices
- Is significantly influenced by teens and pre-teens in popular culture; e.g., music, television, movies

| CREED |

- Understands the Nicene and Apostles Creeds as statements of Catholic belief
- Knows that God is the Creator, all-powerful, who made the world good
- Explains how environment is God's creation and is ours to respect
- Knows and expresses belief that Jesus is the Son of God, the Word Made Flesh, and our Redeemer
- Knows the meaning of the Ascension and that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead
- Knows that the Holy Spirit works as Sanctifier in the Church and in the lives of people
- Understands that the “Kingdom/Reign of God” is reflected in the good that happens in the world
- Identifies ways that the Church carries on the mission of Jesus under the leadership of the pope and the bishops
- Explains the Communion of Saints
- Explains that the Assumption celebrates Mary taken to heaven, body and soul
- Identifies past and present Christian role models; e.g., patron saints
- Knows after death comes judgment which leads to heaven, hell, or purgatory
- Knows an overview of the Bible, understanding that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament
- Is able to locate and read from the Bible the stories for this age group; e.g., both versions of The Creation Story (Gn 1-2)
- Knows that the human race has a common origin reflected in the Adam and Eve story

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Knows and explains the names, meanings, signs, gestures, and symbols of each of the seven sacraments
- Summarizes why the sacraments were given to the Church by Christ and how they impact our daily lives
- Articulates the meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing, and Sacraments at the Service of Communion
- Knows that Baptism forgives original and personal sin through the story of Nicodemus (Jn 3: 1-21)
- Knows that the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ
- Recognizes Christ's presence at Mass: in the assembly, the priest-presider, the proclamation of the Word, and especially in the consecrated bread and wine
- Continues to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation after an examination of conscience
- Understands the healing power of Christ in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (Jas 5: 14-15)
- Understands the Sacrament of Holy Orders as the way Christ continues to preach and sanctify
- Identifies the three degrees of Holy Orders: bishop, priest (presbyter), deacon
- Understands that in the Sacrament of Matrimony, the family is seen as the “Domestic Church”
- Locates and understands Scripture passages related to the sacraments; e.g., Eucharist (Mt 26: 26-30; Mk 14: 22-26; Lk 22: 7-38; I Co 11: 23-26), Reconciliation (Jn 20: 19-23), Holy Matrimony (Mt 19: 5; Eph 5: 25, 31-33)
- Explains the purpose and use of items in a church
- Demonstrates knowledge of the liturgical calendar by explaining the seasons of the Church Year, their meanings and colors
- Recognizes the meaning and celebration of the Sacred Triduum and Easter as our central feast
- Understands that Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation
- Understands the meaning and origin of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-12)
- Identifies the Holy Days of Obligation and explains their meaning
- Participates in preparing a celebration for a particular season or feast

| MORAL LIFE |

- Understands that the presence of sin or evil in the world is “original sin” into which we are all born
- Recognizes attitudes and actions that are sinful or selfish
- Realizes that all choices have consequences and are to be made in light of Gospel values; e.g., Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 25-37)
- Acts out of the belief that mercy and justice are essential to Christian living
- Identifies the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy being practiced within their community
- Identifies the Theological and Cardinal Virtues and recognizes people who demonstrate them
- Practices forgiving and being forgiven
- Begins to be aware of the need for ongoing conversion
- Knows stories of forgiveness in Bible; e.g., The Unforgiving Steward (Mt 18: 21-33); Lost Sheep (Lk 15: 1-7); Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 11-24)

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Understands the difference between the Mass, communal prayer, and private prayer
- Creates and participates in a prayer service involving Scriptures and prayers; e.g., the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles Creed, Act of Contrition, Glory Be, Rosary, Stations of the Cross
- Is introduced to meditation by experiences that engage thought, imagination, emotion, and desire
- Prays in harmony with the seasons of the Church Year
- Composes prayers of praise, thanksgiving, contrition, and petition (Prayers of the Faithful)
- Is introduced to spontaneous prayer
- Prays the Nicene Creed as a group
- Identifies when the Psalms are said or sung during Mass and can explain why
- Uses Scripture as a source of prayer/reflection
- Researches saints and relates their lives to one’s own life
- Prays to the saints asking for their intercession

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIFTH GRADE CHILD |

- Can be critical of adults who appear to be insincere in their faith
- Begins to think about questions of ethics and morality in the context of love, loyalty, promises, etc.
- Can perform special roles in the liturgy and prayer services
- Is becoming open to learning about other cultures and may be more accepting of differences in others
- Has the capacity to be reflective and is more inclined than younger children to look inward
- Transitions into puberty with rapid physical and emotional changes
- Demonstrates marked differences between boys and girls and even among the same gender
- Becomes aware of past, present, and future community experiences
- Belongs to one or more groups because of commitments; e.g., sports, fun, service
- Belongs to peer groups who often develop their own codes of behavior
- Begins to make choices independent of adults
- Recognizes signs and symbols in games, sports, clothes, and professions
- Appreciates and develops personal talents and abilities
- Practices problem-solving
- Begins to be aware of different customs and rituals among people
- Values success in sports and is influenced by sports figures

| CREED |

- Can identify and comment upon the basic concepts of the Creed
- Is able to relate the concept of God as creator and the plan of human salvation revealed by God
- Can provide a critical description of the creation stories as revealing God's plan for humanity
- Can relate the history of Israel as the template for salvation in Christ
- Knows that the Old Testament covenants find their culmination in Christ
- Understands Church as Body of Christ and People of God
- Identifies and understands the diversity of ministries within the Church
- Can discuss the roles of Scripture and Tradition in Catholic life
- Uses relevant theological vocabulary associated with an introduction to Bible study; e.g., religious truth, genealogy, covenant, salvation history, revelation
- Can summarize key Bible passages related to salvation history
- Is able to use the Bible as a source for understanding the Church's faith
- Recognizes and provides examples of different literary forms in the Bible; e.g., fable, parable, myth, hymn, law, poetry, prophetic writing, narratives, faith history, wisdom, etc.
- Is able to explain the development of God's Covenant with Israel: Covenant with Abraham (Gn 15); Joseph (Gn 37-50); Moses (Ex 20); David (1 Sam, 2 Sam)
- Expresses belief in Jesus as the Messiah, Prophet, Teacher, true God and true Man (Lk 4: 16-22; Mt 5-7; NT parables)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Demonstrates a personal connection with God's presence in the rituals and sacred nature of life associated with the Church through the practice of liturgy and the sacraments
- Describes symbolic actions in the sacraments
- Recognizes liturgical prayer including celebrations of the sacraments and the Mass
- Uses and can explain sacramentals; e.g., holy water
- Participates in active ministry at Eucharist, Reconciliation, seasonal rituals of the Church, and prayer services
- Recognizes that the Mass always celebrates the Paschal Mystery and sometimes celebrates the solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Mary and the saints
- Celebrates the Liturgical Year, with special emphasis on Advent, Christmas, Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter season
- Connects the seven sacraments to life experiences
- Reflects upon the Eucharist as both a sacrament and a sacrifice
- Can identify and relate ritual actions in the Old Testament to the sacramental life of the Church

| MORAL LIFE |

- Describes how external factors can form the conscience and signal what is right and wrong, as well as how to behave
- Views one's growing sense of moral understanding as a part of an emerging identity
- Associates and practices Reconciliation as a key part of the Christian moral life
- Recognizes actions that demonstrate how a Christian ought to respond to social, economic, and political situations
- Integrates the skills of justice and peacemaking into own actions
- Articulates and provides positive and negative examples of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Is conscious of racial, ethnic, and class differences and makes specific efforts to be inclusive in relationships, reaching out to those not included or marginalized
- Researches, plans, and reflects on a service project that addresses a need in the community
- Identifies aspects of the person of Jesus in the Gospels that most directly relate to the person one is becoming

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Experiences silence in various forms and environments as a key dimension of prayer; e.g., retreat, adoration, meditation
- Experiences meditation as prayer
- Engages in adoration, recognizing that we are creatures of God
- Reviews and practices all prayers previously learned/memorized
- Uses Scripture, especially the parables, as a source of prayer and can relate the parables to life experiences
- Recognizes Abraham as a model of prayer, especially through the ways in which he expressed his faith through prayer (Gn 18: 16-33)
- Understands that the Psalms can be used as a means of personal and communal prayer
- Describes the stories of figures from the Old Testament as they relate to God through prayer; e.g., Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, etc.

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A SIXTH GRADE CHILD |

- Experiences an increased level of activity and energy
- Can vary in behavior from alert, imaginative, outgoing, and energetic to rebellious, quarrelsome, and self-centered
- Likes to “hang out” in groups
- Can become argumentative, emotional, and sensitive due to fast pace of growth and hormonal changes
- Develops a fierce loyalty to friends; highly influenced by peer opinion
- Develops increased awareness of the opposite sex but may not have appropriate social skills to express this interest
- Demonstrates an increased sensitivity to criticism, especially in front of peers
- Begins to challenge authority
- Looks for heroes and heroines in popular culture
- Begins to develop a historical sense
- Depends on support and security of family while showing signs of wanting to be independent of family
- Experiences ambivalence about changes in his/her own body

| CREED |

- Can describe relationship with God associated with a life of faith in Jesus Christ
- Recognizes that faith is our response to God who gives himself to us
- Recognizes Jesus Christ as the greatest of God's gifts to us
- Knows that God revealed himself gradually in words and actions
- Knows the Church's description of the Trinity as God in three divine persons
- Narrates key moments in his/her faith life and journey, and identifies faith struggles and ways to deal with them
- Is able to narrate and discuss key passages from the Gospels that reveal Jesus' ministry
- Knows the role of Mary, the apostles, saints, and holy people in our faith traditions
- Describes and explains that Mary remained free from sin her whole life from conception to death
- Is able to identify and discuss the role of Christ in salvation in the Bible and Creeds
- Narrates and relates the importance of key moments in Salvation History from the Bible and the history of the Church
- Describes the person and ministry of Jesus Christ; e.g., Baptism of Jesus (Mt 3: 13-17); Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Mk 1: 16-20; Mt 9: 9-13); the teachings of Jesus (Mt 5-7; Mt 25: 31-46; Jn 3: 16; Jn 13-17); The Good Shepherd (Jn 10: 1-10)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Knows that liturgy is the work of Christ through his Church
- Assists in the planning of celebrations of the Liturgical Year, including special feasts; e.g., St. Francis, Our Lady of Guadalupe, May Crowning, etc.
- Associates the sacraments of the Church with life experiences; e.g., family meals and Eucharist, forgiveness and Reconciliation, commitment and Matrimony/Holy Orders
- Recognizes sacraments as effective signs of grace given by Christ and entrusted to the Church
- Participates in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and practices reconciliation in daily encounters
- Recognizes and understands the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- Grows in understanding the many facets of the sacramental life of the Church
- Reflects on the sacramental actions in Scripture: Rebirth (Jn 3: 1-18); Coming of the Spirit (Acts 2: 1-13); Ritual Meal (Mt 26: 26-30; Lk 22: 14-20; 1 Co 11: 23-26; Mk 6: 34-44); Forgiveness (Jn 20: 22-23); Healing (Jas 5: 13-15; Lk 5: 17-25); Ministry (Mt 28: 18-20); Marriage (Gn 2: 21-25; Mk 10: 6-9)
- Recognizes the importance of participating regularly in Sunday Eucharist

| MORAL LIFE |

- Describes experiences of conscience signaling an awareness of right and wrong guiding one toward the Kingdom of God
- Applies the Beatitudes as external guides toward moral and social behavior
- Names and describes the Beatitudes and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as guidelines for living a happy life and applies them to daily life (Mt 5: 3-12, 25: 31-46; Jn 13: 1-20)
- Is able to grapple with personal and moral choices as indicators of a Christian life directed to the call to sainthood
- Identifies specific situations in the social, economic, and political world that call for a Christian moral response

- Articulates the nature of justice and its relationship to peace
- Recognizes that the values of our Catholic faith are contrary to some messages in contemporary culture and can analyze specific instances calling for a response
- Identifies passages from Scripture that model how we are to behave toward others e.g., Mt 19: 13-15; Mt 19: 16-24; Lk 10: 29-37; Lk 10: 38-45; Jn 13: 12-16; Jn 15: 8-10

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Understands that prayer is one pathway to knowing God and to deepening understanding of self, others, creation, and God
- Recognizes that prayer reflects human hope for union with God
- Understands that prayer can console those in need of mercy and healing and develops a practice of praying for the sick and dying
- Recognizes that, as with the Psalms, music and poetry can express prayer
- Describes and practices meditation and contemplative prayer
- Understands prayer's capacity for praising God and can construct prayers of praise
- Can construct prayers of petition
- Practices spontaneous prayer
- Reviews and practices all prayers previously learned/memorized; e.g., Glory Be; the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles Creed, Act of Contrition, the Rosary, traditional meal prayer(s), etc.
- Uses Scripture as a source of prayer
- Knows that the Our Father summarizes the Gospel and practices praying it often
- Can articulate the 'holistic' interconnection of body-mind-spirit; knows that there is more to being human than is empirically obvious
- Participates in retreat experiences focused on Christian prayer and spirituality
- Recognizes that belonging to a spiritual community includes supporting others through prayer

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A SEVENTH GRADE CHILD |

- Experiences great variation in physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development
- Is impacted greatly by his/her changing body and newly acquired ability to think abstractly
- Struggles to express autonomy and may have difficulty distinguishing nuances of truth
- Thrives when allowed opportunities to experience the positive aspects of the new gifts of his/her mind and body
- Is challenged by being encouraged to think and engage in experiences which elicit deep compassion
- Benefits from journaling and meditation as positive sources for his/her introspective tendencies
- Develops most fully when provided experiences that will accommodate the wide variations in maturation
- Demonstrates a need for fairness and justice
- Experiences affirming and positive relationships with persons of both genders
- Continues to develop autonomy within the context of family

| CREED |

- Can relate emerging self-knowledge to the ways in which God relates to us theologically, morally, and through our spiritual sensibilities
- Connects creedal beliefs of the Catholic Church to lived experience
- Describes the ways in which God relates to us through the Tradition: prayer, angels, sacraments, Scripture, and Church teaching, and develops a way of explaining and incorporating these into an understanding of God in the world
- Recognizes major periods in the Bible and in the history of the Catholic Church
- Is able to describe and relate modern examples of the marks of the Church
- Describes the basic Church hierarchy and can identify current individuals who hold these offices
- Demonstrates and can describe the challenge and role of lay leadership in the Church
- Can describe the origins and current state of other Christian traditions and the role of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue in Christian life
- Describes the Paschal Mystery and redemption from sin
- Can participate in a dialogue between faith and science as an example of the relationship between reason and faith
- Recognizes holy people of other traditions
- Identifies one's self as being a unique creation, made in God's image
- Describes the contribution of Mary, saints, and holy people to faith tradition
- Is able to narrate and discuss key passages from the Gospels that reveal Jesus' ministry
- Tells stories from Scripture that describe the person and ministry of Jesus Christ: The Baptism of Jesus (Lk 3: 10-22); The Temptation (Mt 4: 1-11); Jesus Announces His Mission (Lk 4: 14-23); The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16: 19-31); The Money Changers in the Temple (Mk 11: 15-18; Mk 13: 23); The Last Judgment (Mt 25: 31-46); Jesus, The Second Adam (1 Co 15: 36-49)

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

- Experiences the ritual nature of life and associates it with the rituals of Church; e.g., family meals and the Eucharist, seasons of nature, and seasons of the Church Year
- Can conduct a personal examination of conscience
- Demonstrates the skills of reconciliation in the community
- Relates the symbolic nature of the sacraments to symbols in life
- Experiences the risen Christ acting through the sacramental life of the Church
- Identifies, reflects, and describes the personal and communal importance of sacramental actions in Scripture: Commissioning (Mt 28: 16-20; Jer 1: 4-8; Jn 14: 23-28; Acts 2: 1-13); Ritual Meals (2 Chr 35: 1-19; Mt 26: 26-29; Lk 24: 13-32; Jn 6: 28-35); Forgiveness (Mt 18: 21-35; Jn 20: 19-23); Healing (Mk 1: 29-34; Lk 5: 17-26; Jas 5: 13-15); Marriage (Gn 2: 22-24; Mt 19: 1-6; Jn 2: 1-11); Ministry (Lev 8: 1-13; Mt 28: 18-20; Mark 6: 7-13)
- Recognizes and encourages others about the importance of participating regularly in Sunday Eucharist and knows that Christ is present in the assembly, Word, presider, and especially in the consecrated bread and wine

| MORAL LIFE |

- Describes experiences of how external factors can form the conscience and signal what is right and wrong, as well as how to behave
- Views one's growing sense of moral understanding as a part of an emerging identity
- Associates and practices Reconciliation as a key part of the Christian moral life
- Recognizes actions that demonstrate how a Christian ought to respond to social, economic, and political situations
- Integrates the skills of justice and peacemaking into their own actions
- Articulates and can provide positive and negative examples of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Is conscious of racial, ethnic, and class differences and makes definite efforts to be inclusive in relationships, reaching out to those excluded or marginalized
- Designs, executes, and provides substantial reflection on a service project that addresses a need in the community
- Identifies aspects of the person of Jesus in the Gospels that most directly relate to the person he/she is becoming

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

- Prays, practices, constructs, and dramatizes Marian devotions and other devotions; e.g., Stations of the Cross
- Prays and develops prayers blessing God for all he has bestowed
- Creates, composes, and articulates spontaneous prayer to deepen one's relationship with God
- Prays the Nicene Creed with understanding
- Connects Scripture stories to life issues through prayer; e.g., Life of the Christian (Acts 2: 42-47; 4: 32-35); Light under the Bushel Basket (Mt 5: 14-16); Justice of God (Lk 6: 36-38); Kingdom Parable and Actions (Lk 10: 29-37, 19: 1-10; Mark 2: 13-17); The Great Commission (Mt 28: 16-20)
- Prays Scriptures of the day and can navigate Scripture and resources related to Scriptural prayer
- Reflects upon and expresses a relationship with God experienced through prayerful retreats and the Daily Examen
- Recognizes and experiences belonging to a community which prays with and for each other

| CHARACTERISTICS OF A EIGHTH GRADE CHILD |

- Continues to develop autonomy within the context of being in a family structure
- Needs a certain degree of privacy
- Experiences changes during puberty that may cause worry about his/her developing body
- Grows in recognition of his/her uniqueness as he/she experiences affirming and positive relationships with persons of both genders
- Experiences highs and lows in friendships
- Uses music, movies, TV, and video games as pastimes
- Uses sports, musical instruments, and drama as creative outlets for developing talents
- Experiences internet, email, and writing on the computer as everyday highlights
- Needs discussion, reflection, and prayer to organize the experiences and information gathered in life