

Grade 8

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS

Know Your Audience

Just like Jesus, every good catechist knows their audience.

“The catechist – must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.” (NDC #48)

Who Are Your Eighth Graders?

JUNIOR HIGH – Seventh and eighth grade is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially these young people are “crossing the bridge” between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one’s unique pattern of development. However there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Junior High Students:

Physical

- Undergo a growth spurt
- Develop secondary sex characteristics
- Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image

Cognitive

- Begin abstract thinking
- Use a more complex decision making process
- Can reason based on possibilities not just experience
- Can be self-conscious and critical

Identity

- Want to belong
- Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers
- Seek limited independence
- Value friendship based on trust and loyalty

Moral

- Reason at conventional level
- Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws, parents, etc.

Faith

- Desire active involvement and are open to service opportunities
- Are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God
- Look to the Church for the content and expression of faith

Realizing all these factors, a junior high religion program should be one that still involves the concrete, but also provides opportunities for “community building,” “reflection,” and “activity.” These young teens are truly in a transition time. They need both faith structure and flexibility in a religion program.

Junior high school students, who can range in age from 11-15, present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: parents, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. These young people have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these younger adolescents must be attentive to the special circumstances, needs, and attitudes of junior high students.

NOTES

- ❖ Pope John Paul II in **On Catechesis in Our Time** encourages the use of advances in pedagogy; biology, sociology as they help us to model God’s Divine Pedagogy (teaching us gradually in stages according to our level of development). The above noted information is consistent with such documents as the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catechetical Documents of the Church.
- ❖ The above sciences have limitations. While this information does provide references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken into account.

Catechetical Approach Regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation

Although immediate preparation for Confirmation can be integrated into the regular lesson, many parishes are experiencing the benefits of addressing this immediate preparation outside of the regular catechetical sessions. The primary goal of 8th grade is not “Confirmation preparation;” treating it as such risks a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby it is implied that this is the final year of formal religious education. Subsequently the number of young people returning for youth ministry programs seems lower than it might be. Rather, 8th grade is optimally spent reinforcing a pattern of annually revisiting the basic truths of our Catholic faith (with special topical emphases depending on circumstances) thereby instilling the lifelong faith formation called for by the *General Directory for Catechesis* (cf. GDC 70-72). Therefore although if need be Confirmation preparation can be included in regular sessions, it is recommended that such immediate preparation occur during special sessions, thereby freeing regular time for a more thorough review of all the sacraments in Grade 8.

EIGHTH GRADE

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Themes: The Church, Sacrament, and Growth in Holiness.

The Catholic Church is our faith community given life by the Holy Spirit. It is Christ's presence in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit which gives glory and praise to the Father and brings His redeeming love to all. As Catholics, we claim Jesus as the source of all teaching, sacramental life, our mission, and our ministries. As people of God we continue the mission of Jesus through active and committed participation in the life of the Church.

The sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the spirit.

Building a strong and realistic concept of oneself is based on Jesus' vision of being fully human. As a child of God, created in His image and likeness, we are called to holiness and eternal life in God's Kingdom. Developing relationships with peers, parents, and other adults should be based on honesty, love, and respect, leading us into a deeper life and faith and a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

The Catechist should:

- **Make copies of the Parent Page (front and back) for students to take home.**
- **Read the Background for Catechists Information.**
- **Become familiar with the *National Directory for Catechesis & the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.***
- **Review and Clarify Previous Understandings with students:**
 - Briefly review the Church's teaching on the Incarnation and Redemption.
 - Recall the importance of strengthening our relationship with God, self and others.
 - Review the Ten Commandments as a gift, a revelation of God, and the privileged expression of the natural law.
 - Recall that the moral life is a response to God's love.
 - Recall that respect for human life is a basic Gospel value.
 - Know by heart the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross
Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Act of Contrition
Memorare
Blessing before Meals

Apostles Creed
Hail Holy Queen
Mysteries of the Rosary
Prayers of Aspiration
Prayer to the Holy Spirit

EIGHTH GRADE
CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

AT THE END OF THIS GRADE LEVEL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS AND APPRECIATION OF THE EXPERIENCES INDICATED.

[Note about symbols: Of the six tasks of catechesis (knowledge of the faith; liturgy & sacraments; moral formation; prayer; community; missionary spirit) five have a symbol assigned to them. Knowledge of the Faith is the organizing task]

Symbol Key:

 = Liturgy & Sacraments

 = Moral Formation

 = Prayer

 = Community

 = Missionary Spirit

Reference Code: CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Compendium = *Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

USCCA = *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAITH

- ❖ **We are prompted by the Spirit to know the Father through the Son. We come to know Jesus through the Church and become more like Him.**


Date completed _____

CCC #424, 426, 429; Compendium #79, 80; USCCA Chapter 7

 - Students will experience prayer as a deepening of personal relationship with Jesus.

- ❖ **The Church is an invisible communion in the Spirit, and a visible community with a hierarchical structure, and the Pope at her head. These two components form but one mystery, which can be recognized only in faith.** Date completed _____

CCC #795, 771, 779; Compendium #150,151; USCCA chapter 10

 - Students will perceive themselves as part of the visible Church community.

Matthew 16: 12-16 Authority of Peter

Vocabulary: papacy



❖ **The Church is a mystery which can be described through images such as:
The Mystical Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, Flock of Christ, Vineyard
The people of God.**

❖ **The Church is Trinitarian; as the People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, she mirrors the very unity of the Trinity.** Date completed _____
CCC #772, 782, 791, 797, 810; Compendium #151, 153, 154, 156, 159;
USCCA chapters 5 & 10



- Students will perceive themselves as part of the Church: the People of God, the Body of Christ

1 Peter 2:9-10... Church as God's People

Vocabulary: Trinity

❖ **The marks of the Church are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.**

Date completed _____

CCC #750; Compendium #161,165, 166, 174; USCCA Chapter. 11

✠ - Students will participate with the Church community of God as we gather each Sunday to celebrate the Good News that Jesus has died, is risen, and will return again.



- Students will appreciate that belonging to the Church involves participating in its mission.



- Students will become familiar with a Church agency that serves the needs of the community.

Luke 6: 12-16 Selection of the Apostles

Vocabulary: apostles

Consider visiting a historic Church in your deanery: see Appendix I

❖ **Membership in the Church requires the faith-filled act of baptism, full initiation through the celebration of Eucharist and Confirmation, and continuing participation in live of the Church.**

❖ **The sacraments are a continuation of Jesus' ministry and presence to the world and a gift of strength and life to His people the Church.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #782, 1115, 1116, 1123, 1212; Compendium #154, 225, 228, 251;

USCCA chapter 14

✠ - Students will understand the sacraments of initiation as a source of identity. Students will also appreciate the need for frequent reception of the Sacraments of penance and Eucharist as ways to participate in the worship of the Church and to grow in God's presence.

Vocabulary: grace

- ❖ **The Church's creeds are expressions of faith with their foundation in the belief of the early Church, developed in the early centuries in response to new doctrinal questions.**
- ❖ **Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, under the guidance of the Magisterium, contain the fullness of God's divine revelation.**
- ❖ **Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church continues to develop throughout history.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #78,187,192, 748,767,849; Compendium #12, 33,150, 172; USCCA chapter 5



- Students will discuss the future of the Church and what the adolescent role in the Church may be.

John 21:25 Tradition

Vocabulary: (divine) providence

- ❖ **Tradition contains the collected teachings and lived experience of the Church. It must be understood in relation to a faith commitment to God manifest in Jesus Christ.**

- ❖ **The Church proclaims the Good News.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #78, 748, 767, 849; Compendium #12, 150, 172; USCCA chapter 7

Mark 16: 15-16; Matthew 28: 16-20... Command to preach the Good News to all Nations

Vocabulary: incarnation

- ❖ **The Pope and the bishops in communion with Him constitute the Magisterium of the Church. When they teach definitively, they enjoy the Church's infallibility. When they teach authoritatively, the faithful respond with a religious assent, an assent based on the trust one places in the Church as founded by Christ.**

- ❖ **The bishops form a college of which the Pope is the head.**

- ❖ **The Church is an organized structure, and different kinds of leadership roles exist within it, both clerical and lay.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #873, 877 879-895; Compendium #178, 180, 181-187; USCCA chapter 11



- Students will develop a habit of daily prayer to seek guidance and discern one's vocation.

Acts 6:1-6 Appointment of Deacons

Vocabulary: infallibility, laity, dogma

- ❖ **The Church is a group of people that is inclusive and is a multi-faceted faith community with a rich varied liturgical tradition.**

- ❖ **All Christian Churches are part of the People of God and have some albeit imperfect linkage with the Roman Catholic Church as the one true Church.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #775, 814, 818, 819; Compendium #152, 161-163; USCCA Chapters 10-11



- Students will discern the different kinds of levels of commitment determined by different relationships in the community. Develop the skills necessary for building relationships and community life, such as trust, self-disclosure, and communication.

Acts 1:2-14; 2:42-47 Accounts of the Early Church

Vocabulary: ecumenical council, encyclical, Vatican Council II

- ❖ **Only the Catholic Church has the full Teaching of Christ and full means of salvation, but other Christians share elements of unity. Those born into non-Catholic Christian communities do not share in the sin of separation.**
- ❖ **All salvation comes from Christ through the Church, but those ignorant of Christ and the Church may also, by God's grace, be saved.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #816-819, 830, 837-838, 846-847, 870; Compendium #162-163, 166, 168, 171;
USCCA chapter 11



- Students will interpret the importance of modern witnesses in the Catholic Church.



- Students will understand their story in light of the story of salvation.

Vocabulary: heresy, mystagogia, ministry

- ❖ **Mary is the Mother of the Church and the perfect model for all Christians to follow. Mary cooperated with Christ in the work of redemption. Date Completed** _____
- CCC #963, 964, 968, 973, 2030; Compendium #196-197, 429; USCCA chapter 12



- Students will understand they are called to continue Christ's mission of forgiving, healing and reconciling one another.

Luke 1:26-38... Mary says "Yes"

John 19:25-27... Mary as Mother of the Church

Vocabulary: virtue

- ❖ **We recognize important persons and events in the Catholic Church, in the United States, and the local Church of Pittsburgh. Date Completed** _____
- CCC #752, 833; Compendium #147, 167; USCCA chapter 10



- Students will identify traditional Catholic saints whose lives were dedicated to service. Note: see appendix III and IV

Vocabulary: diocese, communion of saints, relics

- ❖ **Christ acting in the Church is the ultimate celebrant of every sacrament.**
- ❖ **The Paschal mystery is a real, historical event; yet it participates in eternity, so that it can be present to all times and places.**
- ❖ **The fruit of sacramental life pertains to both individual and the Church as a whole. Date Completed** _____

CCC #1070, 1076, 1085, 1134; Compendium #218, 220, 222, 231; USCCA chapter 14



- The sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Spirit.

John 4:14-26... Woman at the Well

Vocabulary: messiah

- ❖ **Baptism and the Church are necessary for salvation. But martyrs for faith (Baptism of Blood), catechumens who die, and all those who seek God in ignorance of Baptism (Baptism of Desire) can be saved without Baptism by water.**
- ❖ **The fruits of Baptism are forgiveness of original and personal sin and birth into new life.**
- ❖ **The baptized are incorporated into the Church and share in the priesthood, prophetic mission and kingship of Christ.** **Date Completed _____**
 CCC #1213, 1257-1260, 1263, 1267-1269, 1276-1277, 1281;
 Compendium #252, 261-263; USCCA chapter 15



- Students will accept the invitation and responsibility to become part of parish community experiences.



- Students will recognize that in baptism all Christians receive a call to service.

Vocabulary: commitment, rites

- ❖ **The gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit enable us to develop our talents as members of the Church and strengthen us to serve God as He wills. Though Confirmation is sometimes called “the sacrament of Christian maturity,” that does not mean its reception must await physical, mental or social maturity.** **Date Completed _____**
 CCC #1308, 1829-1832; Compendium #269, 388-390; USCCA chapters 16, 23



- Students will identify and appreciate special gifts and talents which can be used for oneself and others.

⚡ - Students will experience days of reflection and retreats as opportunities for personal spiritual growth.

John 16:7, 13 ...Promise of the Spirit; Acts 2 1-41; John 20; 19-23 ...Pentecost Account

- ❖ **In the liturgy, and especially in the sacraments, there are unchangeable parts, which are divinely given, and parts that the Church has the authority to adapt to different to different cultures.** **Date Completed _____**
 CCC #1205, 1209; Compendium #248-249; USCCA chapter 14

⚡ - Students will appreciate the Church’s ritual life and pluralistic and multi-cultural.

Vocabulary: precepts of the church

- ❖ **The ultimate fruit of the Eucharist is the fullness of divine life and unity of the Mystical Body of Christ. This is why divisions in the Church are so painful and why we must pray for reunion.** **Date Completed _____**
 CCC #1356-1367, 1374-1376, 1396, 1398, 1409, 1413;
 Compendium #280, 282-283, 287, 289; USCCA chapter 17

Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22: 14-20

1 Corinthians 11:23-26... Jesus Institutes the Eucharist. Vocabulary: covenant

- ❖ **In the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine is transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ; this is called Transubstantiation. Christ is totally, completely and substantially present in both or either forms of the bread and wine.**
- ❖ **The Eucharist is a memorial of Christ’s Passover in the sense of anamnesis; it not only recalls, but also makes it present.**
- ❖ **The Eucharist is thanksgiving to God the Father for all of creation.**
- ❖ **Christ is present in the liturgy in the Bishop/Priest presider, the Word of God, in the assembly, and especially in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine.**
- ❖ **Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us, but makes them present; in each celebration an outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes the Paschal mystery present.**
- ❖ **In the liturgical celebration we are joined to the heavenly liturgy.**
- ❖ **The church “in the course of the year,...unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and Nativity through his Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.”**

Date Completed _____

CCC #1088, 1104, 1136-1139, 1187, 1194; Compendium #222-223, 233-234, 242; USCCA Chapter 14

✠ - Students will plan and participate in class/school liturgies, such as the rosary and Stations of the Cross according to the liturgical season.

- ❖ **For the faithful, “individual and integral confession of grave sin followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and the Church.”**
- ❖ **Baptism does not remove the inclination to sin called concupiscence and so sin (a rupture in our relationship with God that is always an intentional choice to do evil knowingly) remains.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #1426, 1484, 1497, 1849-1850; Compendium #297, 392; USCCA Chapter 18

👤 - Students will appreciate that all individual moral decisions affect one’s relationship with self, others, and God.

Matthew 5:17-20; 5:38-48; 5: 3-12... Laws Vocabulary: commandments, free will



- ❖ **The special grace of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has as its effects: the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church: the strengthening, peace and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person is unable to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul, the preparation for the passing over to eternal life.**
- ❖ **The proper time for receiving the Anointing of the Sick is certainly “when the believer begins to be in danger of death because of illness or old age.”**
- ❖ **Each time Christians fall seriously ill, they may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after they have received it, the illness worsens.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #1514-1515, 1520-1523, 1527-1528, 1532; Compendium #315-316, 319;
USCCA chapter 19



- Students will create a family and classroom environment where each person is accepted as unique and treated justly.

John 11:1-27... Lazarus

Vocabulary: Empathy

- ❖ **“Through ordained ministry, that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.”**
- ❖ **The Church confers the Sacrament of Holy Orders only on baptized men whose suitability for the exercise of the ministry has been duly recognized.**
- ❖ **Called by God through the Church, priests are ordained to serve as co-workers with the bishop in serving the Catholic community.**
- ❖ **Priests act in the person of Christ and in the name of the whole Church.**
- ❖ **The priesthood reaches its high point in the celebration of the Eucharist.**
- ❖ **Priests remain celibate for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #1549, 1551-1553, 1562, 1566, 1578-1579, 1598-1599;
Compendium #328, 333-334, 336; USCCA chapter 20



- Students will realize how persons give witness to their faith through their work.



- Sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Spirit.

Genesis 12:1-2; 22:1-19... Abraham, person of faith


Luke 10:1-12; Matthew 5:13-16... Mission of the Disciples

Vocabulary: vocation

- ❖ **Christ is present in the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony to enable the couple to live out what might seem at times an impossible demand.**
- ❖ **Jesus taught that marriage is permanent and cannot be dissolved; the Church cannot change that teaching.**
- ❖ **By its very nature, marriage must be open to the procreation and education of children.**
- ❖ **Persons who are divorced and remarried without an annulment remain in the Church but cannot receive Communion.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #1605, 1615, 1618-1620, 1640-1643, 1648, 1652-1653, 1665;
Compendium #337, 341-342, 346-347; USCCA chapter 21

 - Sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Spirit.

1Corinthians 13: 5-7... Love is....

Vocabulary: Canon law, grace, vocation, covenant, commitment

- ❖ **All people are created in God's image.**
 - ❖ **Every Christian is called to holiness.**
 - ❖ **Each person is unique and gifted.** **Date Completed** _____
- CCC #355, 1700, 1702, 1934, 1936-1937, 2013, 2028;
Compendium #66, 358, 412-413, 428; USCCA chapters 6 & 24



-Student will reflect on and participate in service opportunities for oneself within the parish and local community.

Genesis 2:4-3:24...Life according to God's will

Psalms 8... Dignity and power of the person

Vocabulary: integrity

- ❖ **Every person has the responsibility to develop a personal and communal or ecclesial faith relationship with Jesus.**
- ❖ **Catholic values, such as the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and the cardinal and theological virtues, shape our lives.** **Date Completed** _____

CCC #426, 1804-1805, 1812-1813, 2447; Compendium #80, 378-379, 384, 52;
USCCA chapters 23 & 24



-Students will examine how social ills and injustices affect the lives of all people as well as their responsibility for others even when suffering is perceived as global experience.



-Student will develop ways to put into practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The student will become aware of local and global concerns.

Matthew 5:3-10... Beatitudes

Vocabulary: Beatitudes

- ❖ **Scripture provided selfless views of friendship.**
- ❖ **There are role models-local, global, and historical-who exemplify Catholic values.**
- ❖ **Skills are needed to engage in healthy relationships with peers, parents, and other adults as well as a vibrant life of prayer and life in the Church.**

Date Completed _____

CCC #828, 1717, 1829, 2217, 2219-2220, 2030; Compendium #165, 360, 388, 459, 260
USCCA chapters 23, 24, & 28



- Students will experience various forms of prayer, such as silent meditation, prayer with Scripture, centering prayer, spontaneous prayer, formal prayer, prayer with song, and liturgy of the hours.



- Students will become involved in service outreach projects, clothing and food collections and fund-raising drives.

1 Samuel 18: 1-5; 20: 11-42... Friendship of David and Jonathan

Psalms 139:13-15... All knowing God

Vocabulary: evangelization

