

preschool

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 Preschoolers?

Faith Development

Children at this age:

- ❖ Need parents and family life as a ground for their faith.
- ❖ View size, power, and position as reasons for responding to God, parents, and rules.
- ❖ Need to share in common language and rituals of faith.
- ❖ Can begin to develop a personal relationship with God, especially through prayer.
- ❖ Form dispositions toward the world and attitudes toward worship that will last a lifetime.
- ❖ Need continuity and routine to provide order to their world.
- ❖ Focus on images rather than reality.
- ❖ Need help to distinguish imagination from reality.
- ❖ Need assurance that scary wishes do not make bad things come true.
- ❖ View events in isolation.



Preschool Catechists

Guiding Principles

Catechists should:

- Change activities frequently to accommodate short attention spans. Repeat short and simple songs, poems, and stories often for and with the children. Do not present abstract religious concepts since these are beyond the mental capabilities of the preschool child.
- Be sensitive to children who cannot accomplish tasks requiring coordination. Praise attempts at the “process” rather than the “product.”
- Provide for individual attention to be given to each child. Have a small pupil-teacher ratio.
- Promote trust and helpfulness, spontaneity and caring, mutual respect and a sense of wonder through your attitude. Help children develop an appreciation for the simple ordinary things in life; nurture a sense of reverence through informal prayers of praise and thanksgiving.
- Employ a basic routine and use clear directions. Ensure a feeling of security within each child by keeping basically the same order of activities. Create an atmosphere where routine and acceptance are taken for granted—no matter how the children differ.
- Allow children to experience your love and care for them as a way to know a loving God—faith is more “caught” than “taught.” Help children to discover positive attributes of God through parents and a caring environment of Church.
- Provide climate and experiences allowing children’s self-worth to be raised: affirmation, acceptance, respect, freedom, activities allowing for success. Show sensitivity to children’s feelings.
- Allow opportunities for making choices as a basis for moral development; children need to make decisions. Provide the stable environment children need for emotional security by providing freedom within limits. Show patience toward children who do not want to participate in group activities. With patience and encouragement, children will eventually join in.
- Encourage natural curiosity by providing many sensory experiences. Foster growth in appreciation of use of the senses in addition to the magnificence of all creation.
- Help children discover their powers and capabilities as a way to appreciate themselves as unique and special.
- Listen patiently to children’s attempts to question and verbalize—do not rush through talking sessions.
- Help children learn to experience, and thus cope, with many small group situations. Encourage but do not force sharing. Affirm children’s friendliness and kindness as good. Encourage them to be thoughtful of others.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Preschool – Age 3

Children at this age:

- Gain control of large motor skills.
- Gain control of SOME fine motor skills, and over body processes. (competency important to self image)
- Need to stretch and move frequently.
- Increase use of hand skills for self care, eating, dressing, building and use of toys, simple household tasks.
- Alternate steps in climbing; begin to learn to jump.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Need a strong parental influence.
- Need to be valued for who the individual is.
- Need freedom to achieve a measure of independence (“I can do it myself”).
- Are sensitive to others’ actions and feelings’ are easily hurt themselves.
- Are just beginning to learn to share, but prefer solitary activities and “parallel” play with others.
- Like one-on-one interaction with adults, want to please and need recognition.
- Enjoy routines which bring feelings of stability and security.
- Like to pretend; will use puppets to initiate conversation.
- Can identify with things that make them feel happy, sad, angry, or frightened.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Show marked growth in language.
- Make and understand pertinent comments.
- Speak in short sentences.
- Practice conversational skills, although conversations are often one-sided.
- Have limited attention spans (4-6 minutes).
- Enjoy simple stories; want them to be retold with the same sequence and inflections.
- May have difficulty in understanding directions and require one brief direction at a time.
- Need to see, hear, and touch lesson related objects and pictures.
- Learn by experiencing and imitating.
- Delight in discovering self and world.
- Develop imaginations.
- Love to pretend.
- Believe all inanimate objects have human traits.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Preschool – Age 4

Children at this age:

- Are refining motor skills; large skills are developed and in balance; are developing their small muscle control.
- Change activities frequently; are incapable of sitting still for any length of time unless highly motivated, attention span is limited.
- Are full of energy and action.
- Are improving their physical coordination.
- Have interest in manipulative materials.
- Are developing good sense of rhythm.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Need a strong parental influence.
- Are curious about surroundings— are eager to use senses to explore.
- May begin to share with a friend; undergo a period of testing “my” world against peers/siblings.
- Are nearly self-dependent in a routine; however, vacillate between dependence and independence.
- Appreciate having individuality recognized.
- Need to feel welcomed and wanted by family and friends.
- Like making choices; may begin to see wisdom of rules.
- Crave companionship of peers.
- Need to know “what comes next.”
- Like group work and planned experiences, especially parties and celebrations.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Have a strong sense of wonder and awe about life.
- Have a strong desire to learn.
- Are eager for intellectual manipulation.
- Are becoming more acute in perceptual ability.
- Are imaginative and creative.
- Delight in long words.
- Delight in playful activity such as rhyming.
- Perceive analogies.
- Speak in sentences, but have limited linguistic expression of experience.
- Have fluent expression through play.
- Are able to tell name, address, and phone number.

- Are not always able to judge adequately for their own safety.
- Are animistic (all objects have feelings).
- Are anthropomorphic (attribute human characteristics to inanimate objects and to God).
- Are in symbolic stage of drawing.
- Understand and can explain pictures with special characteristics which are exaggerated—even if the results are not often recognized by adults.

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.



preschool

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Theme: Our love for God's gifts and our sense of wonder grow as we become more aware of God's creation. God made each of us someone special. Each of us wonders about ourselves and other living things. ALL people and living things can be signs of God's goodness to us.

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*.**


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 become aware of God through nature, people, and events in daily life.**

Date completed _____

CCC #32-34, 51-53, 293; Compendium #3, 6, 53; USCCA pp. 55-56



- Students will appreciate all living things as good because God made them.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made.

Genesis 1:1-24, 31... Creation

Vocabulary: creation, Creator, God

❖ **We are grateful to God our loving Father and Creator for all the beautiful gifts He has given us.**

Date completed _____

CCC #224, 341, 357-358; Compendium #43, 62, 66, 67; USCCA pp. 53-56



- Students will experience God's love for His people by celebrating feasts, listening to bible stories, and having conversations about God. Experience love and desire to love in return.



- Students will value the bible as a special book that tells us about God's love.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer"). Experience prayer alone and with others.



- Students will explore ways to care for family and friends.

Colossians 3:16b, 17... Always be thankful Vocabulary: Creator, praise, thanksgiving

❖ **We proclaim and experience the love and care of God.**

Date completed _____

CCC #301, 303; Compendium #54-55; USCCA pp. 14, 18, 51



- Students will experience God's love for His people by celebrating feasts, listening to bible stories, and having conversations about God. Experience love and desire to love in return. Understand self as someone special.



- Students will value the bible as a special book that tells us about God's love.



- Students will participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made.

Mark 10:14... Let the children come to Me Matthew 28:20... I am always with you

Vocabulary: Bible, God

❖ **As a child of God each of us shares God's life in a special way.**

Date completed _____

CCC #355, 356; Compendium #66; USCCA pp. 193



- Students will understand self as someone special.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made.

Mark 10:14... Let the children come to Me Vocabulary: God

❖ **God has something special in life for each of us to do.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2226; Compendium #366; USCCA pp. 117



- Students will experience God's love for His people by celebrating feasts, listening to bible stories, and having conversations about God. Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.



- Students will value good behavior as something to be imitated.



- Students will participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration. Participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer').



- Students will develop ways to treat friends kindly. Explore ways to care for family and friends. Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

❖ **God made ALL people of every age, race, culture, and ability.**

Date completed _____

CCC #225,360, 361, 1934; Compendium #618, 412; USCCA pp. 73, 326-327



- Students will appreciate all living things as good because God made them.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer').



- Students will develop ways to treat friends kindly. Explore ways to care for family and friends.

Genesis 1:1-24, 31... Creation

Vocabulary: celebrate, God

❖ **God made each of us to love Him and be His child now and always.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1, 163, 1023; Compendium #209; USCCA pp. 67-68



- Students will experience love and desire to love in return. Understand self as someone special. Appreciate all living things as good because God made them. Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.



- Students will become aware of the Church as a place where God is specially present and different members of God's family gather.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer'). Experience prayer alone and with others.

Genesis 1:1-24, 31... Creation

Mark 10:14... Let the children come to Me

Vocabulary: God, Church, Creator

❖ **God has given us the ability to make and do many things.**

Date completed _____

CCC #307, 2427-2428; Compendium #56, 513; USCCA pp. 67, 327



- Students will understand self as someone special.



- Students will participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Colossians 3: 16b, 17... Always be thankful

Vocabulary: thanksgiving

❖ **God created each of us as a helper and co-worker.**

Date completed _____

CCC #307, 372-373, 1879, 1931-1932; Compendium #56, 71, 401, 411,366;

USCCA pp. 66-68



- Students will understand self as someone special. Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.



- Students will value good behavior as something to be imitated.



- Students will experience prayer alone and with others.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Colossians 3: 16b, 17... Always be thankful

Vocabulary: creation, God

❖ **Our parents who give us life, love, care, and provide for us are a very special and wonderful gift from God.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2215; Compendium #459; USCCA pp. 377-379



- Students will experience love and desire to love in return. Understand that God's presence is experienced through parents and other caring adults.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "For my family, Lord hear our prayer").



- Students will explore ways to care for family and friends. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Colossians 3: 16b, 17... Always be thankful

Vocabulary: prayer, thanksgiving

❖ **Playmates and classmates are meant to be our friends.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1878, 1879; Compendium #401; USCCA pp. 66-68, 73-74



- Students will appreciate all living things as good because God made them. Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.



- Students will experience prayer alone and with others.



- Students will develop ways to treat friends kindly. Explore ways to care for family and friends. Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Mark 10:14... Let the little children come to Me

Vocabulary: forgive

❖ **Friends are also gifts from God.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1878, 1879; Compendium #401; USCCA pp. 66-68, 73-74



- Students will appreciate all living things as good because God made them. Realize God wants us to love people and forgive them.



- Students will participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration. Experience prayer alone and with others.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Colossians 3: 16b, 17... Always be thankful

Vocabulary: creation, God

❖ **God is the maker of the world and of all created things.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2215; Compendium #459; USCCA pp. 377-379



- Students will experience love and desire to love in return. Understand that God's Presence is experienced through parents and other caring adults.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "For my family, Lord hear our prayer").



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made. Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share. Explore ways to care for family and friends. Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.


Genesis 1:1-24, 31... Creation


Vocabulary: Bible, creation, Creator, God


❖ **Prayer is talking to God. We are called to pray every day.**

Date completed _____

CCC #2559, 2659, 2660; Compendium #534, 558, 565; USCCA pp. 461-464, 478, 491

 - Students will become aware of the Church as a place where God is specially present and different members of God's family gather. Become aware of the priest as a special person who represents Jesus and leads us in prayer. Participate in celebrations for special seasons: Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving. Experience the Mass as a very special celebration of God's people.

 - Students will participate in prayer through gestures, music, poetry, art, dance, story, and celebration. Participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer'). Experience prayer alone and with others.

 - Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made.


Colossians 3:16b, 17... Always be thankful

Vocabulary: God, praise, thanksgiving, Church, prayer, priest


❖ **Jesus listened to and talked to people in a loving way.**


Date completed _____


CCC #458, 459; Compendium #85; USCCA pp. 481-495

 - Students will experience God's love for His people by celebrating feasts, listening to Bible stories, and having conversations about God. Experience love and desire to love in return. Understand that God's presence is experienced through parents and other caring adults. Understand that Jesus' feelings e.g. happiness at being welcomed, rejection by friends, sadness over death, are like our own.

 - Students will value good behavior as something to be imitated.

 - Students will value the bible as a special book that tells us about God's love.

 - Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "For my family, Lord hear our prayer').

 - Students will develop ways to treat friends kindly. Explore ways to care for family and friends. Become aware of the need to be cooperative and share.

Mark 10:14... Let the children come to Me

Vocabulary: Jesus

❖ **Mary is the mother of Jesus.**

Date completed _____

CCC #495; Compendium #97; USCCA pp. 144-145, 471, 520



- Students will experience love and desire to love in return. Understand that God's presence is experienced through parents and other caring adults. Understand that Jesus' feelings, e.g. happiness at being welcomed, rejection by friends, sadness over death, are like our own.



- Students will participate in simple spontaneous prayer and litany-type prayers (e.g. "Thank You, God," "I Love You, God," "for my family, Lord hear our prayer").



- Students will participate in celebrations for special seasons, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving.



- Students will explore ways to care for family and friends. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Luke 2:4-20... Jesus' Birth and the Visit of the Shepherds John 20:1-8, 11-16...Easter Story

Vocabulary: Christmas, crib, crucifix, Easter, Jesus, Joseph, Mary

❖ **Sacred images, e.g. statues, pictures, crucifix, are reminders of God's presence in our lives.**

Date completed _____

CCC #1667-1668, 1674, 2132; Compendium #351,353,446; USCCA pp. 293-303



- Students will understand that Jesus' feelings, e.g. happiness at being welcomed, rejection by friends, sadness over death, are like our own.



- Students will participate in celebrations for special seasons, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving. Experience the Mass as a very special celebration of God's people.



- Students will participate in activities that show we care for the things God made. Participate in activities that are helpful at home and in class.

Luke 2:4-20... Jesus' Birth and the Visit of the Shepherds John 20:1-8, 11-16...Easter Story

Vocabulary: Church, crib, crucifix, statue

STUDENTS SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS

Simple prayers, for example: Jesus, I Love You
Thank You, Jesus
Sign of the Cross
Prayer before meals