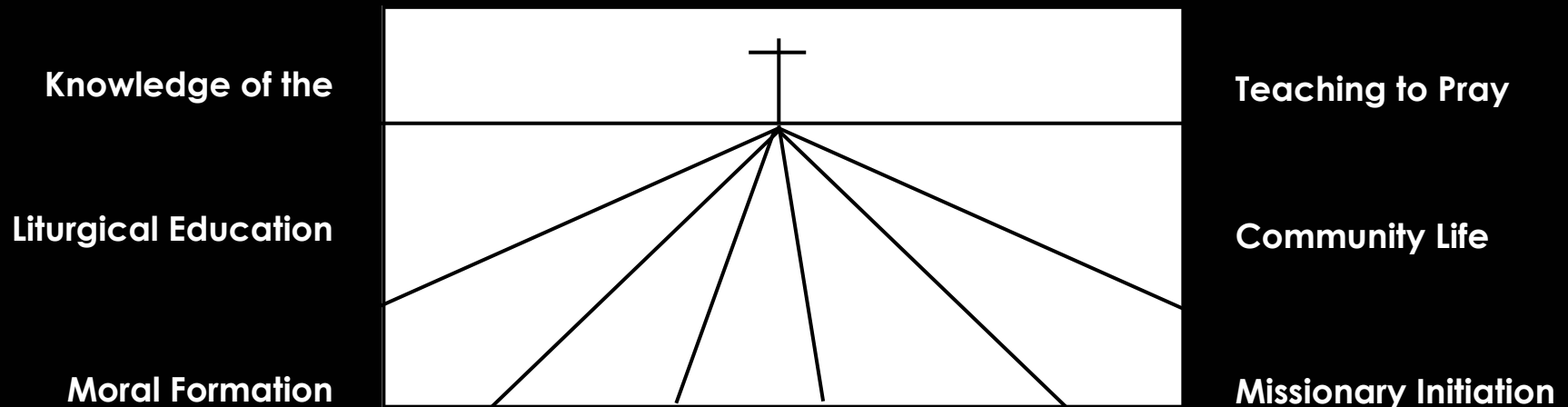


# Religion Standards for Catholic Education

In the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



Presented in Grade Level Clusters  
Grades K-2 \* Grades 3-5 \* Grades 6-8

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# from Archbishop Flynn...

August 2005

Dear Principals and Directors of Religious Education Programs:

As each of you share in my work of 'making Jesus Christ known and loved by all,' I am pleased to announce the Catholic Education and Formation Ministries (CEFM) Division has completed work on Religion Standards for Grades K – 8. The task of sharing our precious Catholic faith with our children is an incredible privilege and serious responsibility and these standards will assist you in that task. The standards are based on the Six Tasks of Catechesis contained in the *General Directory of Catechesis* (#85 & 86).

According to our current statistics there are approximately 65,000 children registered in K-8 Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs with a potential for more according to parish Baptismal records. We know that many of their parents and guardians have had a limited exposure to the full range of the truths of faith. Many steps have been taken to address this issue, so their children can grow in the knowledge of the Catholic faith and develop into adults with mature faith lives. The implementation of K-8 Religion Standards is another step we can take in assisting families with children in their faith development.

As we move forward as an Archdiocese in this privilege of sharing our faith and passing it on to the next generation, I am with you in spirit and in prayer.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Harry J. Flynn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Harry J. Flynn, D.D.  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

# from the Director of Education...

August 2005

Dear Principals and Directors of Religious Education K-8 Programs,

I am excited to share in the special mission we have all been called to do, 'making Jesus Christ known and loved' as our Division, CEFM, (Catholic Education and Formation Ministries) assist you in implementing the K-8 Archdiocesan Religion Standards in Faith Formation programs and in Catholic schools.

In my role as the Director of Education for the CEFM, and formerly as Associate Superintendent of Schools, it was becoming evident from many parent and pastor phone calls, and from you, a framework for a comprehensive faith formation program was needed. We now have this framework outlined in the K-8 Religion Standards based on the Six Tasks of Catechesis and grounded in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Using these Standards as a framework for your religion programs will help you:

- Assure that all children have a basic foundation of faith formation regardless of what parish/school program they attend
- Assure parents there is consistency in their child's faith formation even if they move to another parish
- Provide an instructional planning guide
- Design effective professional development
- Choose any approved religion curriculum and appropriate resources that best serves your community while meeting the expectations set within the Standards

The CEFM staff is able to assist you as resources in implementing these Archdiocesan Religion Standards. Please feel free to contact any one of them to help you or to answer any of your questions.

I ask God to bless you in this very important work.



Dr. Lori Glynn  
Director of Education  
Catholic Education and Formation Ministries

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Please Note Abbreviations:

CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*    GDC = *General Directory for Catechesis*    NDC = *National Directory for Catechesis*

# an Introduction to the Religion Standards

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## The Standards and Benchmarks in Context:

The mission of the Catholic Church is to evangelize the world. In the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis we describe this mission as:

*‘Making Jesus Christ known and loved in our time by choosing to live out the Gospel in every moment’*

Such a mission requires ongoing personal and community awakening, transformation, and witness of persons and communities for the people of God to be effective in responding to this call. In other words, each man, woman and child needs ongoing formation and support to freely make this choice to grow in the skills, knowledge and practices needed to faithfully and fruitfully live out the Gospel in the joys and sorrows of each day. The aim of such ongoing formation and support, called “catechesis,” is to encourage a living, explicit, and fruitful profession of faith. (GDC #66)

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children through their lives and practices as family. Parents cannot hand on the Roman Catholic religion alone, however. The community also has essential roles in handing on the faith. Whether you identify it by CCD, religious education, faith formation, catechism class or some other name, the teaching authority of the Church, called the “magisterium,” expects the nature, mission and principles of catechesis to be the same from place to place in order for the faith to be lived and handed on in its totality.

The religion standards and benchmarks thus serve as guidelines for equipping the people and parishes for making Jesus Christ known and loved and for proclaiming the Gospel in this time and place. These standards draw together the magisterial teachings and directives related to catechesis, including the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *General Directory for Catechesis*, *Our Hearts Are Burning Within Us*, and the *National Directory for Catechesis* and best practices of teaching and the human sciences. In particular, the standards are based on the six fundamental tasks of catechesis (knowledge of the faith, liturgical formation, moral education, teaching to pray, community life and missionary initiation, GDC # 85-86). The benchmarks correspond to the knowledge, skills and practices appropriate to the various developmental phases in relation to that desired in a mature adult Catholic. The standards and benchmarks, in conjunction with the other guidelines and resources offered through Catholic Education and Formation Ministries, provide a consistent framework for religious education and faith formation processes at the parishes and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

## How the Standards Came to Be:

During the 2004–05 academic year, a committee of parish directors of religious education, Catholic school principals and CEFM staff met to develop the standards. Various resources informed their work. Foundational church documents (see above) provided an initial framework that corresponded to the realities of parish/school life. Archbishop Flynn’s pastorals on Evangelization and Racism were incorporated. Comparisons were made to the religion standards developed by other dioceses from around the country, most notably the Archdioceses of Milwaukee, Baltimore, St. Louis, and the Dioceses of Madison, Green Bay, St. Cloud, and Fargo that generously shared their standards. The ‘Protocol for Assessing the Conformity of Catechetical Materials With the Catechism of the Catholic Church,’ which is used to evaluate catechetical texts for the conformity with the CCC, was also referenced. Finally, the scope and sequences of various religion publishers were reviewed. Other Archdiocesan offices, especially the Worship Center, consulted on the standards as well.

## How the Standards are Written:

The basic framework for the religion standards consists of the six tasks of catechesis: knowledge of the faith, liturgical education, moral formation, teaching to pray, education for community life, and missionary initiation. Under each of the six tasks are subtitles which describe several standards within that task. Benchmarks in learning are then listed under each standard. Given the complexity and size of our parishes and schools and the need for flexibility in faith development, the benchmarks are divided into three age groupings by grade levels: K – 2, 3 – 5 and 6 – 8. High school benchmarks have not yet been established, because the United States bishops are currently working on outcomes for materials used with the Catholic high schools with plans to address parish high school resources next. Note that the ‘end in view’ of the standards is an adult faith, not that all Catholic faith is taught to a child before the end of eighth grade.

The benchmarks offer generalized outcomes with sparse evaluative detail. Each parish/school has the freedom to make the benchmarks resonate with the local culture and custom. For example, one benchmark asks children to name a number of ‘holy men and women’ who lived after the time of Jesus. Rather than being designated by the committee, each local parish/school is to specify a recommended list of names that relate to local culture, including the patron saint of the parish/school. Another benchmark asks children to ‘demonstrate reverence while in church.’ Each faith community is to designate how it will evaluate what reverence looks like based on local custom, be that genuflecting, bowing, no running/shouting, etc. Again, each parish/school will be able to add or adapt according to their situation.

## How to Use the Standards:

The standards and benchmarks offer expectations for what is to be taught in the parish/school religious education programs. Leaders can utilize these standards and benchmarks as a guide in developing their religious education programs. Leaders and teachers can ensure that comprehensive, systematic formation is being addressed by utilizing the standards in mapping both their curriculum and what is taught at different grade levels. It is an expectation that these standards will be adopted in their entirety. Parents, catechists and teachers can also use the standards and benchmarks to determine appropriate expectations for children at different phases of faith development.

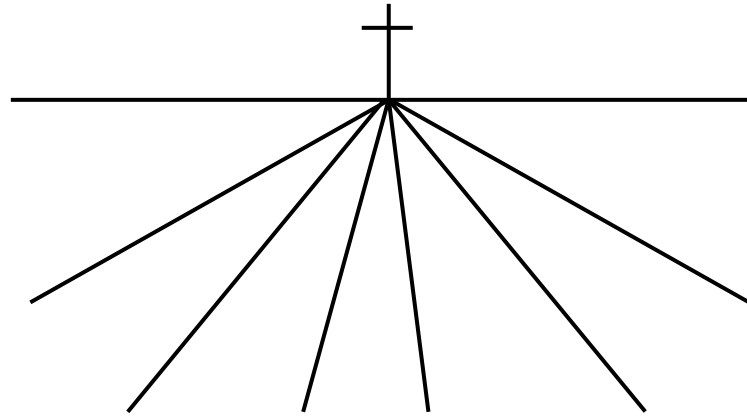
Children need to experience caring communities, vibrant liturgies, and faith lived by people of all ages. The standards and benchmarks also make it clear that it takes the whole community living out its mission to teach and support children. The staff of the CEFM, the priests and catechetical leaders in the parishes and Catholic schools of the Archdiocese work together to assist parents in sharing the faith with their children. The ultimate goal is “to make Jesus Christ known and loved in our time.” These standards are an attempt to lead us toward accomplishing this goal.

## Catholic Education and Formation Ministries (CEFM) Staff Available to Assist With Implementation:

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# Religion Standards for Catholic Education

## Grades K-2



# Grades K-2

## Standard One

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### Promoting Knowledge of the Faith

Helping children to know, understand, and integrate Catholic beliefs. (CCC #26-1065; GDC #84, 85-87; NDC #20, 25, 41-43)

#### A. Know, love and be in relationship with Jesus Christ

- Recognize God is the Creator of all things
- Identify that God is Trinity: One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Identify that “life” is our greatest gift from God
- Explain that we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and receive his Body and Blood when we receive the Holy Eucharist
- Recognize and appreciate God’s presence in all of creation
- Identify that Jesus is both truly God and truly man
- Identify angels as special messengers of God

#### B. Explore Scripture as hearers and doers of the Word

- Know that the Bible is a special Book of God’s Word and demonstrate how we show respect for it
- Know that we read from the Bible at Eucharist (Mass)
- Know that the Psalms are a book of the Old Testament and are prayed at Eucharist (Mass)
- Demonstrate how the Bible is divided into two main sections: Old and New Testament
- Give examples of how Bible stories tell us about God’s love for us

#### C. Understand the major teachings of Catholicism

- Recognize the Great Commandment and the Ten Commandments
- Identify the seven Sacraments
- Name and explain the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Reconciliation

- D. Know the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including respect-life teaching
- Respect that each person is created in God's image and likeness
  - Show respect for all of creation
- E. Learn the richness of the Church's tradition and understand Church history
- Recognize that Jesus came to save all people
  - Name three holy men or women who believed in God
  - Name three holy men or women who lived at the time of Jesus and those living now who follow Jesus' teachings
- F. Learn the meaning and practical relevance of current Church teachings as presented by the pope, diocesan bishop, Vatican congregations, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Identify the roles of family, laity, deacon, priest, bishop and pope as leaders within our church

## Standard Two

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### Liturgical Education

Helping children to know how the Church worships through full, active, and conscious participation in liturgy (CCC #1066-1690; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 22-38)

- A. Understand, live, and bear witness to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church
- Recognize the saints as holy people
  - Identify the different parts of their church (Baptismal font, altar, etc.)
  - Describe how grace is God's life in us
  - Give examples of how we live a Christian life

## B. Understand Church doctrine on the Eucharist and other sacraments

- Identify that Jesus gave us the sacraments as a way to celebrate and remember God's love for us, and through which Jesus becomes truly present
- Recall and tell the story of the Last Supper
- Explain the purpose of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and different ways to celebrate it
- Experience the Sacrament of the Eucharist as an action in which we give thanks and praise, receive Jesus, remember His life, death and resurrection and are sent to be Christ to others
- Reflect on the experience of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) (what you see/hear/images/smell/what touched you)

## C. Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy

- Identify the two parts of the Eucharist (Mass): Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Show reverence while being in Church
- Relate the Sunday Scripture readings to daily life
- Recognize the Liturgical Seasons/Feasts of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Ordinary Time

## D. Value the dignity and responsibility of Christian Baptism

- Identify that through the Sacrament of Baptism, we become members of the Catholic Church, are consecrated to God, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Give examples of how we respect one another

## E. Understand the roles of the laity and ordained in liturgical celebrations

- Experience various celebrations of prayer and identify the leader
- Actively participate in various liturgical celebrations (e.g. Praying with the community (assembly), singing, choir, gift bearers)
- Identify the roles of priest, deacon, choir, lectors, and the community (assembly) in our Eucharistic Celebration

## F. Understand and participate in the Church's daily prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the Psalms

- Listen to a child's translation of Psalm 23, the Good Shepherd
- Know that the Psalms are found in the Bible
- Tell that Catholics praise God in a special morning prayer and pray in thanksgiving in the evening. Bedtime is a time to pray, trusting in God's care while we sleep
- Demonstrate, in the context of prayer, the gestures related to Liturgy of the Hours: sign of the cross, bowing

# Standard Three

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## Moral Formation

Helping children to recognize, understand, and express that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive, and serve others. (CCC #1691-2557-1065; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20,41-45)

### A. Understand the “Great Commandment” of Jesus

- Recite the ‘Great Commandment ’and know it is one of our guides for living

### B. Understand the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and moral teachings of the Church and live according to them

- Recognize that the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes are guides for moral living
- Show respect for those in authority

### C. Understand the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of each person

- Seek to develop a relationship with Jesus
- Understand that actions affect others
- Demonstrate respect for all living things
- Acknowledge that the body is sacred because each person is made in God’s image

### D. Understand the meaning and nature of sin and the power of God’s grace to overcome it

- Acknowledge that having a change of heart and actions often takes time
- Distinguish between accidents, mistakes and sin
- Relate the concepts of sin, God’s forgiveness and mercy and how sin hurts us, others and our relationship with God
- Understand the Sacrament of Reconciliation and how to celebrate it
- Explain the difference between accidents, mistakes, choices and sin
- Internalize God’s unconditional love and mercy (e.g. story of the Good Shepherd)

### E. Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience

- Practice simple forms of guided reflection as a tool for understanding how to make informed moral decisions
- Pray for God’s help in knowing right from wrong

- F. Promote the Gospel of Life so that respecting life from conception until natural death is honored in personal behavior, public policy, and in the expressed values and attitudes of our society
- Show respect and responsibility for all life
  - Pray in thanksgiving for the gift of life
- G. Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values
- Demonstrate ways to live the ‘Great Commandment’
  - Recognize ways to volunteer at your parish/school
  - Know that because of Baptism, we are Christ’s disciples

## Standard Four

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### Teaching to Pray

Helping children to learn to pray the way Jesus did: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe. (CCC #2588-2865; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 29, 33, 34, 38)

- A. Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer, with special attention to the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model for all Christian prayer
- Develop a personal relationship with Jesus
  - Understand that the family is the primary setting for learning how to pray
  - Recite the following prayers: The Sign of the Cross, Angel of God, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer Before Meals, Act of Contrition
  - Formulate spontaneous prayers
- B. Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic traditions of mysticism and contemplation

- Identify Guided Meditation as a form of prayer
- Meet, listen to and respond to God through Guided Meditation using Gospel stories of Jesus
- Participate in breathing and relaxing exercises as ways to enter prayer

C. Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ

- Demonstrate a sense of wonder and curiosity in their relationship with God

D. Engage in shared prayer with others, especially family prayer, as well as at parish meetings and in small communities of faith

- Formulate prayers of petition and intercession
- Participate in prayers of petition and intercession with their family, classmates and small faith sharing groups

E. Recognize and encourage practices of popular piety and devotion that help believers express and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ

- Participate in a blessing led by someone else
- Give and receive daily blessings

## Standard Five

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### *Education for Community Life*

Children experience community life as an apprenticeship of faith which cultivates values, relationships, and ecumenical dialogue. (CCC #811; GDC #84, 86, 87, NDC #20, 29, 36, 41)

## A. Foster spiritual growth in community

- Perceive the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy as central to the life of the Church
- Demonstrate their awareness that through Baptism they are God's special child and a member of the Christian Community

## B. Cultivate human values and Christian virtues that foster growth in interpersonal relationships and in civic responsibility

- Know and practice the Golden Rule
- Identify as a disciple of Christ and a member of Christ's Body, the Church
- Associate trust in God with their own well-being and happiness
- Understand their responsibility to care for themselves, others and the environment
- Adopt Christian values and virtues to guide Catholic life

## C. Nurture marriage and family life

- Experience family life as the domestic Church
- Know that Jesus lived as a member of a human family
- Understand the role and authority of adults within the family and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of children within the family structure

## D. Share actively in the life and work of the parish, and foster the potential of small communities to deepen the faith relationships of members, to strengthen the bonds of communion with the parish, and to serve the Church's mission in society

- Participate in works of charity with their family or class
- Develop relationships beyond their family or class in which they are able to share faith

## E. Understand the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church, including an understanding of the Church's authority and structures and of the rights and responsibilities of the Christian faithful

- Identify oneself as Catholic
- Recall the story of Pentecost
- Retell the story of their Baptism and name ways to live as a member of Christ's body

F. Support the ecumenical movement and promote the unity of God's people as an important dimension of fidelity to the Gospel

- Identify all followers of Jesus as our brothers and sisters
- Pray for the unity of all the Baptized

## Standard Six

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### Missionary Initiation

Assist children to become disciples of Christ, present in society, and able to witness their faith. (CCC #1912-2046; GDC #84, 87; NDC #17-20, 43, 51)

A. Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful

- Identify that life is our greatest gift from God
- Plan ways to share their faith with others
- Appreciate that many diverse cultures make up the Catholic Church
- Relate how the Sunday Eucharist (Mass) asks us to help others

B. Respond to God's call whether as a lay person, ordained, or vowed religious

- Give examples of saints, heroes and holy people
- Identify how members of the parish are living their Baptismal call
- Recognize that the 'People of God' are the Church

C. Encourage, motivate, and equip the faithful to speak to others about scripture, tradition, and teachings of the Church

- Share their favorite Bible stories with others
- Apply their knowledge of the faith to their daily life

**D. Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teachings**

- Explore ways to share one's gifts
- Take actions that show their love of God's creation

**E. Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and working for the transformation of society through personal and social action**

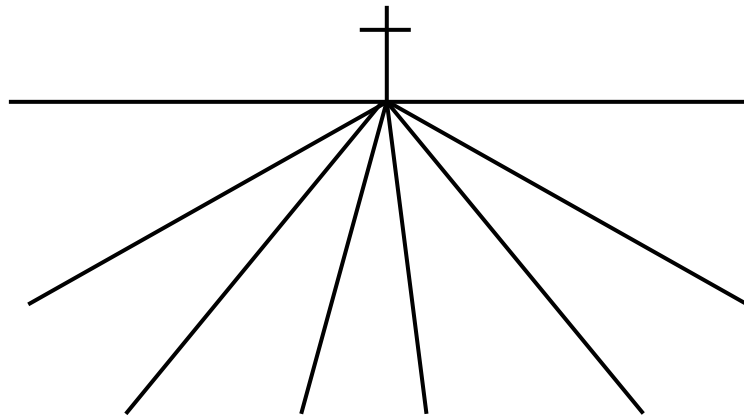
- Tell how to imitate Jesus by welcoming others, sharing with those in need and forgiving
- Identify different service ministries in the parish
- Name ways to practice peace making

**F. Appreciate the value of inter-religious dialogue and contacts**

- Know that the Our Father (Lord's Prayer) is a Christian prayer
- Know that all major religions have 'holy spaces' like a church
- Demonstrate respect for persons of other religions
- Know that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were Jewish

# Religion Standards for Catholic Education

## Grades 3-5



# Grades 3-5

## Standard One

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### Promoting Knowledge of the Faith

Helping children to know, understand, and integrate Catholic beliefs. (CCC #26-1065; GDC #84, 85-87; NDC #20, 25, 41-43)

#### A. Know, love and be in relationship with Jesus Christ

- Recognize that Jesus is the visible sign of God's love
- Know that Mary was Jesus' mother and Joseph his foster father
- Recognize that God sent Jesus to teach us how to live lovingly, justly, humbly, and prayerfully
- Recognize that the Church is the visible sign of Jesus
- Identify and explain that the "People of God" (the Church) help one another because we are disciples of Jesus
- Explain that the purpose of the Christian life is to know, love, and serve God and to live forever with Him in heaven
- Recognize and explain that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost and continues to guide us

#### B. Explore Scripture as hearers and doers of the Word

- Explain a few parables and how they relate to our lives
- Demonstrate the ability to find scripture passages
- Explain how the Old Testament expresses the faith of the Israelite people and the New Testament expresses the faith of Christians as followers of Christ
- Know and retell the "Creation Story" (Gen. 1:1-31)

#### C. Understand the major teachings of Catholicism

- Retell the Beatitudes and explain how they relate to our lives
- Identify the Sacraments of Initiation, Healing, and Service and how they are celebrated
- List the Holy Days
- Explain the role of Mary and the saints in the life of the Church
- Know that Jesus lived, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven
- Recite the Great Commandment and Ten Commandments; identify where they are found in the Bible and explain how they relate to our life

D. Know the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including respect-life teaching

- Recognize the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and how they are lived out in our daily lives
- Recognize the Catholic Social Teachings
- Know that life begins at conception

E. Learn the richness of the Church's tradition and understand Church history

- Understand that God calls each person to be holy and that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus all are saved
- Name six holy men or women who believed in God and lived before the time of Jesus
- Name six holy men or women who lived at the time of Jesus and those living now who follow Jesus' teachings
- Know that the universal church consists of those both living and dead
- Recall some history of your parish

F. Learn the meaning and practical relevance of current Church teachings as presented by the pope, diocesan bishop, Vatican congregations, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Explain how a pope is chosen
- Describe the roles of the laity, vowed religious and ordained

## Standard Two

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### Liturgical Education

Helping children to know how the church worships through full, active, and conscious participation in liturgy (CCC #1066-1690; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 22-38)

A. Understand, live, and bear witness to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church

- Understand the meaning of grace as a sharing in God's life
- Describe how the sacraments begin with Jesus; Jesus is the original Sacrament
- List the Seven Sacraments
- Give examples of how we live a Christian life
- Explain why Sunday (the Lord's Day) is the main day for celebrating Eucharist (Mass)
- Show respect for sacred time and places, including proper behavior in church and with religious objects while praying together

## B. Understand Church doctrine on the Eucharist and other sacraments

- Identify and explain the meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation, Anointing; the Sacraments of Service: Marriage, Ordination
- Summarize why the Eucharist has a special place in the life of the Church
- Acknowledge the Sacrament of the Eucharist as an action in which we give thanks, receive Jesus and remember His life, death and resurrection, and are sent to be Christ to others
- Explain the purpose of sacramentals
- Reflect on the experience of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) (what you see/hear/images/smell/what touched you)

## C. Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy

- Explain the significance of the two major parts of the Mass: Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Name, locate, and state the purpose of the sanctuary, altar, ambo, tabernacle, baptismal font, sanctuary light, paschal candle, lectionary, Book of the Gospels, Stations of the Cross, chalice, Reconciliation Room, chapel
- Explain the meaning and significance of the Church seasons/feasts: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time
- Identify and explain the Holy Days of Obligation
- Reflect on the experience of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) (what you see/hear/images/smell/what touched you)
- Experience a Word/Communion service

## D. Value the dignity and responsibility of Christian Baptism

- Explain how Baptism calls us to be disciples of Jesus
- Understand that Baptism calls us to live as responsible stewards of God's gifts to us

## E. Understand the roles of the laity and ordained in liturgical celebrations

- Explain the roles of various ministers in our liturgical celebrations (priest, lector, Eucharistic Minister, greeters, etc.)
- Actively participate in various liturgical celebrations (e.g. praying with the community (assembly), singing, choir, gift bearers, readers, greeters, etc.)

F. Understand and participate in the Church’s daily prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the Psalms

- Locate the Psalms in the Bible
- Know that the Psalms are used in both the Liturgy of the Hours and at Eucharist (Mass)
- Pray short selections from the Psalms particularly suited to morning and evening prayer
- Compose and pray intercessions for the world, the Church and personal needs

## Standard Three

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### Moral Formation

Helping children to recognize, understand, and express that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive, and serve others. (CCC #1691-2557-1065; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20,41-45)

A. Understand the “Great Commandment” of Jesus

- Apply the ‘Great Commandment’ to daily life

B. Understand the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and moral teachings of the Church and live according to them

- Identify the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes
- Acknowledge how they guide us (e.g. telling the truth, avoiding bad language, respecting the good name of others)
- Recognize the Works of Mercy and the Catholic Social Teachings

C. Understand the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of each person

- Choose to treat others with respect as Children of God
- Express how each person is responsible for one’s own life and decisions
- Determine ways to make moral decisions (e.g. critical reflection process)

## D. Understand the meaning and nature of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it

- Describe how to use critical reflection when encountering a moral problem
- Explain personal, venial, mortal and social sin
- Give examples of some virtues and vices
- Retell stories from the Bible about God's forgiveness (e.g. Lost Son, Lost Coin, Lost Sheep)
- Describe an examination of conscience

## E. Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience

- Choose critical reflection to examine various values and behaviors promoted by society and the media
- Describe the role of the teaching church in knowing right from wrong

## F. Promote the Gospel of Life so that respecting life from conception until natural death is honored in personal behavior, public policy, and in the expressed values and attitudes of our society

- Explain how peacemaking and working for justice enriches us
- Apply the principles of fairness and justice to family and peer relationships, to sports and other activities
- Relate some Bible stories that demonstrate Jesus' respect for all persons (e.g. person born blind, leper)
- Name ways to defend those whose dignity or life is threatened

## G. Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values

- Demonstrate responsible stewardship (e.g. involvement in parish ministry, financial contributions, care for all property)
- Practice mercy, compassion and justice as essential components of a Christian life
- Volunteer time and talent for the parish community

# Standard Four

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### Teaching to Pray

Helping children to learn to pray the way Jesus did: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe.  
(CCC #2588-2865; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 29, 33, 34, 38)

- A. Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer, with special attention to the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model for all Christian prayer
- Know that the Our Father is an integral part of the public prayer of the Church
  - Recite the following prayers: the Apostle's Creed and the Rosary
  - Formulate spontaneous prayers, including intercessions
- B. Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic traditions of mysticism and contemplation
- Use Old and New Testament stories for Guided Meditation
  - Engage in contemplative prayer for longer time periods (10 minutes)
  - Demonstrate reverence for and through this type of prayer
- C. Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ
- Invite God into their everyday experiences, needs and relationships at different times of the day
- D. Engage in shared prayer with others, especially family prayer, as well as at parish meetings and in small communities of faith
- Formulate prayers which reflect their growing understanding of the world and its needs
  - Understand the importance of learning to pray for enemies
- E. Recognize and encourage practices of popular piety and devotion that help believers express and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ
- Understand that blessings include both praise of God for ordinary gifts and intercessions for the appropriate use of these gifts

# Standard Five

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## Education for Community Life

Children experience community life as an apprenticeship of faith which cultivates values, relationships, and ecumenical dialogue. (CCC #811; GDC #84, 86, 87, NDC #20, 29, 36, 41)

### A. Foster spiritual growth in community

- Recognize that the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy is central to the life of the Church
- Name models and heroes of our faith and retell their stories
- Identify their God-given gifts and explore ways to share them for the common good

### B. Cultivate human values and Christian virtues that foster growth in interpersonal relationships and in civic responsibility

- Demonstrate a sense of compassion toward their peers that grows out of their deepening awareness of God's love for them
- Exemplify awareness and responsibility for the common good
- Interpret stories of saints or biblical figures who demonstrate God's faithfulness
- Give examples of the cardinal and theological virtues

### C. Nurture marriage and family life

- Know that the Fourth Commandment teaches us to respect and obey our parents and to work for harmony in our families
- Relate strong family relationships with mutual respect and understanding of the different roles of family members
- Know that the Sacrament of Matrimony supports parents throughout their life
- Identify strategies for maintaining personal respect and boundaries with family and friends
- Understand that from the moment of conception, a child has the right to life

### D. Share actively in the life and work of the parish, and foster the potential of small communities to deepen the faith relationships of members, to strengthen the bonds of communion with the parish, and to serve the Church's mission in society

- Distinguish between acts of charity and acts of justice
- Relate works of charity to principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Practice acts of charity and justice

- E. Understand the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church, including an understanding of the Church's authority and structures and of the rights and responsibilities of the Christian faithful
- Name the four marks of the Church (one, holy, catholic, apostolic)
  - Understand the importance of the Feast of Pentecost
  - Explain how laity and the ordained (deacons, priests, bishops, pope) share in the mission of the Church
- F. Support the ecumenical movement and promote the unity of God's people as an important dimension of fidelity to the Gospel
- Choose respectful language and behavior toward others' religious beliefs and practices
  - Express that Christ is the source of unity of all Christians by their Baptism

## Standard Six

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### Missionary Initiation

Assist children to become disciples of Christ, present in society, and able to witness their faith. (CCC #1912-2046; GDC #84, 87; NDC #17-20, 43, 51)

- A. Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful
- Identify personal gifts/talents and use them for good stewardship
  - Demonstrate ways to share the Gospel with others
  - Know that the term 'Catholic' means universal
- B. Respond to God's call whether as a lay person, ordained, or vowed religious
- Explain how the 'People of God' help one another to live as disciples
  - Identify ways in which giving service can be a lifestyle and a career
  - Identify ways saints, heroes and holy people model Christian life
  - Identify ways the ordained serve the Church

C. Encourage, motivate, and equip the faithful to speak to others about scripture, tradition, and teachings of the Church

- Apply the Beatitudes to their life
- Demonstrate how to live faith at home, school and other places

D. Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teachings

- Relate how the Eucharist calls all to serve because we are all made in the image and likeness of God
- Explain that the Reign of God is a time and place of peace and justice
- Practice mercy and justice as essential components of Christian life
- Plan, participate in and evaluate a service activity
- Apply the Catholic Social Teachings to daily life
- Examine the various values and behaviors promoted in society – especially the media

E. Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and working for the transformation of society through personal and social action

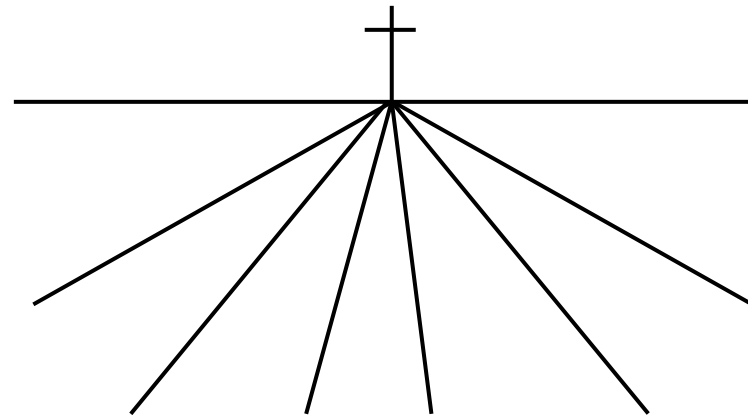
- Explain how forgiving, peacemaking and working for justice enrich our communities
- Treat all life with respect and care for it with good stewardship
- Apply the principles of fairness and justice in all relationships and activities (e.g. family and peer relationships, sports, activities)
- Differentiate between need and want
- Give examples of loving and unselfish behavior or heroism

F. Appreciate the value of inter-religious dialogue and contacts

- Identify ways they experience belonging to the Church, the 'Body of Christ'
- Identify some of the major religions of the world (e.g. Judaism, Muslim)
- Demonstrate respect for persons of other religions

# Religion Standards for Catholic Education

## Grades 6-8



# Grades 6-8

## Standard One

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### Promoting Knowledge of the Faith

Helping children to know, understand, and integrate Catholic beliefs. (CCC #26-1065; GDC #84, 85-87; NDC #20, 25, 41-43)

#### A. Know, love and be in relationship with Jesus Christ

- Explain various titles of Jesus (Priest, Messiah, Teacher, Lamb of God, Prophet, Son of God)
- Explain that “faith” is our lifetime response to God who reveals himself to us (CCC, 26)
- Discuss the implications for how belief in Jesus affects our life

#### B. Explore Scripture as hearers and doers of the Word

- Recognize the list of Old and New Testament books found in the index of a Catholic Bible
- Define oral tradition, literary forms and synoptic gospels
- Explain the Hebrew Covenant
- Describe the historical and social world of Jesus
- Recognize that the Scripture (Bible) is the primary way God reveals Himself
- Know that the Scripture (Bible) is the inspired Word of God and not a book of historical or scientific facts
- Know and retell the following Bible stories:
  - “Call of Abraham” (Gen. 12: 1-8)
  - “Joseph in Egypt” (Gen. 37:26-36)
  - “Moses and the Exodus” (Ex. 12:1-14, 32-42)
  - “Prophets” (David and Isaiah)
  - “Great Commandment” (Mt. 22:34-40)
  - “Birth, Death, Resurrection, Ascension of Jesus” (Gospels)
  - “Prodigal Son” (Luke 15:11-31)
  - “Sermon on the Mount” (Beatitudes – Matthew 5: 1 – 12)
  - “Pentecost” (Acts of the Apostles 2: 1 – 14)

### C. Understand the major teachings of Catholicism

- Define the meaning of creed.
- Explain the elements of the Catholic faith contained in the Creed
- Know that salvation is a gift from God that requires our response of both faith and good works
- Know that the Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith and life
- Name the marks of the church
- Explain the communion of saints

### D. Know the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including respect-life teaching

- Name the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and know the meaning of each
- Give examples of how we show respect for all life
- Give examples of Catholic Social Teachings and how they relate to our life

### E. Learn the richness of the Church's tradition and understand Church history

- Recall major events, themes and people from salvation history: Creation, Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Exodus, Covenant, Joshua, David, Ruth, Isaiah, Prophets, Kingdoms, Exile, Deborah, Gospel Writers, Mary, Apostles, Paul, and the Paschal Mystery
- Recognize the importance of ecumenical dialogue in furthering Christian unity
- Recognize the value of different cultural expressions of Catholicism
- Explain the "Kingdom" or "Reign of God"
- Recognize some significant development in church history after the time of Jesus (e.g. Vatican II)
- Name three holy men or women who live now and follow the teachings of Jesus
- Explain some important historical facts about your parish

### F. Learn the meaning and practical relevance of current Church teachings as presented by the pope, diocesan bishop, Vatican congregations, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Identify that the unique origin of the Roman Catholic Church is rooted in Jesus' commissioning of Peter to be the head of the apostles and unifier of the Church
- Describe the role of the magisterium of the Church (teaching authority)
- Describe the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church; the relationship of the local pastor to the bishop, to the USCCB and to Rome
- Give examples of how the bishop uses his public role to promote the common good and Catholic Social Teachings
- Explain the role of infallibility
- Explain the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and how they are lived in a 'vowed religious life'
- Describe the process of canonization

## Standard Two

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### Liturgical Education

Helping children to know how the church worships through full, active, and conscious participation in liturgy (CCC #1066-1690; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 22-38)

- A. Understand, live, and bear witness to the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church
- Give examples of how we witness to Jesus' life, death and resurrection
  - Explain how the sacraments strengthen us to witness to Jesus' life
  - Understand the Christian meaning of death and afterlife and explain the funeral rituals
- B. Understand Church doctrine on the Eucharist and other sacraments
- Identify and explain the signs and symbols for each Sacrament and describe what each Sacrament celebrates
  - Understand the nature and purpose of ritual
  - Understand the centrality of Eucharist in the Christian life
  - Describe the importance of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Mass
  - Describe the main responsibilities of priesthood and permanent diaconate
  - Explain the importance of the vocation of Christian marriage
  - Name the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
  - Reflect on the experience of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) (what you see/hear/images/smell/what touched you)

C. Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy

- Explain how liturgy is the work of the Christian community (assembly)
- Appreciate the importance of symbolic actions in ritual
- Describe how the Christian mystery is celebrated over the cycle of time: the Liturgical Year, symbols associated with each season and the liturgical color for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time
- Explain the Lenten fasting regulations
- Reflect on the experience of Sunday Eucharist (Mass) and how it connects one to family, parish and daily life
- Know the difference between the Sunday Eucharist (Mass) and a Word/Communion service

D. Value the dignity and responsibility of Christian Baptism

- Recognize the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism and our Baptismal vows for living as disciples of Jesus Christ and as members of the Catholic community
- Discuss how our Baptismal vows relate to the Creed and are prayed at the Sacraments of Initiation
- Exhibit ways to be evangelizers
- Explain the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process

E. Understand the roles of the laity and ordained in liturgical celebrations

- Help plan, implement, participate and/or lead several different prayer experiences
- Understand the role of the assembled community in our liturgical celebrations
- Participate in various liturgical ministries

F. Understand and participate in the Church's daily prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the Psalms

- Pray the canticles: Zechariah, Mary and Simeon (Morning, Evening, Bedtime)
- Pray the Liturgy of the Hours during main liturgical seasons and feasts
- Lead a younger grade in Liturgy of the Hours

# Standard Three

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## Moral Formation

Helping children to recognize, understand, and express that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive, and serve others. (CCC #1691-2557-1065; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20,41-45)

### A. Understand the “Great Commandment” of Jesus

- Explain how the ‘Great Commandment’ guides us in moral decision making
- Explain the relationship between the ‘Great Commandment’ and free will

### B. Understand the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and moral teachings of the Church and live according to them

- Apply the Ten Commandments, Catholic Social Teachings, Beatitudes and Works of Mercy to daily living
- Understand that living a moral life is a life long process of conversion
- Understand and act on moral norms concerning speech (e.g. tell the truth, avoid “bad language”)
- Show respect for the property of others and make restitution for damage or theft of another’s property

### C. Understand the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of each person

- Exhibit the use of critical reflection process in daily life
- Choose to respect the human body as a Temple of the Holy Spirit (e.g. virtue of purity)
- Apply principles of Catholic moral teachings to daily living
- Show respect for the property of others and make restitution for damage or theft of other’s property

### D. Understand the meaning and nature of sin and the power of God’s grace to overcome it

- Know different forms of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Interpret different Bible stories about Jesus and forgiveness
- Know the precepts of the Church
- Understand that with the grace of God, one overcomes sin

E. Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience

- Adopt the use of scripture, doctrine, and church teachings in making moral decisions
- Distinguish between object, intention and circumstances as sources of the morality of human acts
- Acknowledge that people should have a well formed conscience and live according to it
- Show continuing desire to live a moral life

F. Promote the Gospel of Life so that respecting life from conception until natural death is honored in personal behavior, public policy, and in the expressed values and attitudes of our society

- Demonstrate how moral virtues strengthen our lives
- Relate sources of violence, oppression and injustice and how they impact today's society
- Give examples of ways to influence public policy
- Show ways to respect life at all stages

G. Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values

- Seek ways to be disciples of Jesus
- Display respect for others, in all areas, including sexuality
- Distinguish charity from justice

## Standard Four

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### Teaching to Pray

Helping children to learn to pray the way Jesus did: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe. (CCC #2588-2865; GDC #84, 85, 87, NDC #20, 29, 33, 34, 38)

- A. Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer, with special attention to the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model for all Christian prayer

- Understand that the Our Father is a summary of the Gospels
- Recite the following prayers: Apostles' Creed, Prayer for the Dead (Eternal Rest...), Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, Stations of the Cross

**B. Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic traditions of mysticism and contemplation**

- Engage in as much as 15 minutes at a time in Guided Meditation
- Experience and practice other forms of meditation (e.g. Lectio Divina, Mantras)

**C. Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ**

- Experience the freedom to approach God with their deepest needs, concerns and struggles

**D. Engage in shared prayer with others, especially family prayer, as well as at parish meetings and in small communities of faith**

- Lead others in prayers of petition and intercession
- Reflect their awareness of the complexity of world situations through different prayer forms
- Recognize, appreciate and understand a variety of ways God answers prayers

**E. Recognize and encourage practices of popular piety and devotion that help believers express and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ**

- Demonstrate an understanding that every Baptized person is called to be a blessing and to bless
- Foster intergenerational prayer with others
- Experience Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross and the Rosary

# Standard Five

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## Education for Community Life

Children experience community life as an apprenticeship of faith which cultivates values, relationships, and ecumenical dialogue. (CCC #811; GDC #84, 86, 87, NDC #20, 29, 36, 41)

### A. Foster spiritual growth in community

- Explain the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist in the life of the Church
- Name the gifts of the Holy Spirit and give examples of how they help form us in community

### B. Cultivate human values and Christian virtues that foster growth in interpersonal relationships and in civic responsibility

- Display compassion for all
- Identify ways to know and do God's will
- Distinguish between the long-lasting happiness that comes from hope in God and the temporary happiness that comes from the world and things
- Apply the cardinal and theological virtues and give examples of how they are guides for our daily living
- Identify and interpret our duty to work with religious and civic leaders to build a world based on justice and the common good for all

### C. Nurture marriage and family life

- Understand the value of sexuality and chastity
- Exhibit increased responsibilities within the family unit
- Practice and apply conflict resolution strategies to their relationships
- Understand the value of the Sacrament of Matrimony
- Understand that when adults freely enter into the covenant of marriage it entails faithful love and is indissoluble
- Understand that every human life, from conception until death, is sacred

- D. Share actively in the life and work of the parish, and foster the potential of small communities to deepen the faith relationships of members, to strengthen the bonds of communion with the parish, and to serve the Church's mission in society
- Participate in the ministries of the parish
  - Describe the relationship between charity and justice
  - Advocate for justice
- E. Understand the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church, including an understanding of the Church's authority and structures and of the rights and responsibilities of the Christian faithful
- Summarize the four marks of the Church
  - Understand the mission of the Church as herald, prophet, servant and community
  - Apply the baptismal call to holiness (priest, prophet and king) to all areas of their life
  - Identify the roles and responsibilities of the laity and ordained in carrying out the mission of the Church
- F. Support the ecumenical movement and promote the unity of God's people as an important dimension of fidelity to the Gospel
- Distinguish between uniquely Catholic beliefs and practices and those shared by other Christian religions
  - Dialogue about faith with persons of other religious traditions

# Standard Six

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## Missionary Initiation

Assist children to become disciples of Christ, present in society, and able to witness their faith. (CCC #1912-2046; GDC #84, 87; NDC #17-20, 43, 51)

### A. Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful

- Participate in a retreat or evening of reflection
- Explain the nature and purpose of evangelization
- Demonstrate how their good works can be a means to evangelize
- Invite others to learn more about or participate in the parish community

### B. Respond to God's call whether as a lay person, ordained, or vowed religious

- Describe the mission of the laity in the world
- Discuss the contributions of various religious orders in the United States
- Discuss ways the vocations of single life, married, vowed religious and ordained give service to others
- Give examples of saints, heroes and holy people
- Apply the virtues to daily life
- Identify founders of major religious communities and how their followers serve the Church today (e.g. Dominicans, Franciscans, Notre Dame and St. Joseph Sisters)

### C. Encourage, motivate, and equip the faithful to speak to others about scripture, tradition, and teachings of the Church

- Understand that the main teachings of the faith are contained in the Creed
- Participate in and recall personal faith sharing

### D. Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teachings

- Identify forces of violence, oppression and injustice present in today's society
- Apply the Gospel message regarding justice and peace to circumstances in life
- Evaluate the issues of homelessness, hunger, poverty and illiteracy found in the larger community in light of the Church's social teachings

E. Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and working for the transformation of society through personal and social action

- Identify opportunities to perform the Works of Mercy
- Evaluate what participation in service teaches oneself
- Evaluate wants and needs in light of the common good
- Assume responsibility for changes in behavior and/or attitude (e.g. recycle, clean up after self)

F. Appreciate the value of inter-religious dialogue and contacts

- Determine key areas where the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations are similar and different
- Demonstrate respect for persons of other religions
- Show an awareness of the special place Jewish people have in salvation history

# Archdiocesan Evangelization Prayer

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Holy God,  
Fill our hearts with the fire of your  
love.

Awaken us, Holy Spirit, to witness to  
the presence of Jesus in every moment  
of our lives.

Renew us, Lord, so that our homes,  
parishes, neighborhoods, and world  
are transformed into Your kingdom on  
earth where peace and justice reign.  
Amen.

