



Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization

Archdiocese of Washington Religion Curriculum Guide

Parent Guide: Grade 8

The Archdiocese of Washington employs a common religion curriculum for students throughout its parishes and schools called *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization*. This curriculum identifies what each child should be able to know, understand and do at each grade level. Based on the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the curriculum contains six key elements and fourteen standards or areas of learning. The chart below outlines the curriculum structure.

Catechism Pillars	Key Elements/Tasks of Catechesis	Curriculum Standards
I. Creed- Profession of Faith	Promote Knowledge of Faith (1)	Creed (1)
		Scripture (2)
II. Celebration of Christian Mystery	Liturgical Education (2)	Sacraments (3)
		Liturgy (4)
III. Life in Christ	Moral Formation in Christ (3)	Conscience (5)
		Christian Living (6)
IV. Christian Prayer	Teaching to Pray in Christ (4)	Prayer (7)
		Christian Living*
	Education for Community Life (5)	Catholic Church (8)
		Ecumenism (9)
		Catholic Relationships (10)
		Vocation (11)
Christian Living*	Missionary Initiative (6)	Catholic Social Teaching (12)
		Inter-religious Dialogue (13)
		Missionary Vocation (14)

*While Christian Living is not a pillar of the Catechism, it flows from the Creedal statement of the preceding pillars.

Each standard consists of learning indicators or objectives that convey the age appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviors that students will learn. These indicators give focus to instruction and guide the use of texts and resources.

Below is a snapshot of the focus of each standard, followed by an example of a specific indicator for that standard.

1. CREED: Among other statements of faith expressed in the Creed, students will explore the central mystery of the Holy Trinity while examining how God became flesh in the Incarnation. They will understand that Christ offers the possibility of salvation through his life, death, and resurrection. Students will pursue their relationship with God through use of their faith and reason and learn to rely on their faith even in times of suffering and tragedy.

- *Show how faith helps us to face the hardships of suffering, disappointment, and tragedy because God is with us.*

2. SACRED SCRIPTURE: Students will explore the Bible as a library of sacred writings. They will study the intent of the Old Testament, New Testament, Letters, and the Gospels. Particular

focus is given to the role of the Holy Spirit and growth of the early Church as described in Acts of the Apostles. Students will recognize the influence of culture, history, and literary forms on the development of the Bible as well as the need for guidance from the Holy Spirit to integrate Scripture into their lives today.

- *Recognize the Holy Spirit as central to opening the eyes of those who read Scripture and moving them to have faith in God.*

3. SACRAMENTS: Students will recognize the sacraments as special signs of grace that build up both the individual and the Church. Special emphasis will be given to the sacrament of Confirmation which seals recipients with a permanent mark of grace and strengthens in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit first received through Baptism. Students will strive to appreciate that the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist at Mass, requires full and active participation from everyone involved.

- *Show understanding that the role of the faithful at Mass is full, conscious, and active participation.*

4. LITURGY: Students will discuss the liturgical year as the celebration of the mysteries of the Lord's birth, life, death and resurrection. They will also explain the importance of the Eucharist as both the public prayer of the Church and as nourishment for their spiritual life.

- *Explain what is meant when we say: the Eucharist is the Source and Summit of Christian life.*

5. CONSCIENCE: Students will describe how the gift of free will works with a well-formed conscience to lead them to make good choices. They will discuss the influence of: the guidance of others, the Holy Spirit, and the Theological and Cardinal Virtues on their moral formation. Students will recognize that even in instances where they might make wrong choices and sin, God's mercy is always present to them.

- *Explain that formation of conscience is a lifelong task, assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the witness and advice of others, guided by the teaching of the Church, and nurtured through prayer.*

6. CHRISTIAN LIVING: Students will recognize that the goal of Christian Living is working to bring about the Kingdom of God; and that the Holy Spirit and Church help them to work toward this goal. They will also discuss the Church's teaching of the right use of the gift of human sexuality.

- *Describe human sexuality as being all that makes a person male or female: physical characteristics, spiritual awareness, and the ability to participate in procreation.*

7. PRAYER: Students will understand that prayer builds and deepens their personal relationship with God and opens them up to His call in their lives. They will recognize that prayer can be expressed vocally or through meditation and contemplation. Students will use the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, as important aids to their prayer life.

- *Understand and practice the three expressions of prayer: vocal, meditative, and contemplative*

8. CHURCH: Students will comprehend that the Church is a sacrament and sign of salvation to the world. They will understand that the Church draws her life from the Eucharist and Word of Christ and, as members of the Church, they are members of Christ's body. They will discuss how the Second Vatican Council provided guidance for the Church's call to be leaven for the world today.

- *Show understanding that the Church is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men in this world.*

9. ECUMENISM: Students will explain that Catholics and other Christians share a common belief in the Trinity and that dialogue with other Christians is an evangelizing work of the Church. They will recognize that while Catholics respect other Christians, the fullness of truth is found in the Catholic Church.

- *State that our respect for other Christians means that we can both recognize what we share in common and also be honest about how we differ, particularly in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.*

10. CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES AND RELATIONSHIPS: Students will explain that Catholic moral values such as chastity and temperance guide them in the right use of their sexuality and enable them to grow in their friendships. They will understand that all sin causes harm to their relationships with God and others. Students will recognize that though some sins, such as, abortion are grave, God's mercy and healing are available to those who seek conversion of heart.

- *Explain that Catholic moral values, which guide how we use our gift of sexuality, prohibit sex outside of marriage.*

11. VOCATION: Students will understand that God calls each of them to love and serve Him in holiness throughout their lives. They will identify the forms of vocation including priesthood, religious life, married life, and single life. .

- *Recognize the Church's understanding of vocation as our unique call from God to love and serve Him in holiness.*

12. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Students will realize that the dignity of every human person is the foundation of all Catholic Social Teaching. They will identify abortion, suicide, and euthanasia as acts that oppose human life which are to be resisted. Students will understand that they continue Jesus's mission through acts of stewardship and service.

- *Understand that we continue Jesus' mission when we participate in the ministries of the Word, build community, worship, and serve others.*

13. INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: Students will recognize that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are monotheistic religions and this characteristic provides a point of commonality through

which dialogue may begin. Students will explain that, as Christians, they share a common heritage with the Jewish people.

- *Explain that the Church recognizes her common heritage with the Jews, and deploras all hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism.*

14. MISSIONARY VOCATION: Students will show an understanding that all Christians are called to evangelize - share the Good News of the Gospels with others - and that the Holy Spirit has given everyone special charisms to help them in this call.

- *Identify situations in family life and the parish community that challenge us to live out our baptismal call to discipleship and service.*