

First Grade

Diocese of Madison Catechetical Standards



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Introduction

Thank you for answering the call of God to be a teacher of the Faith, which involves leading children closer to Christ! Catechesis is the art of teaching the Faith in order to facilitate a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. The teaching should lead to understanding who Christ is in light of God’s word (what He has revealed to us in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition) in order to be changed through His grace and become more and more like Him. Transformed by the working of grace, *“the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments, and to hope as He invites us to”* (*On Catechesis in Our Time*, Bl. John Paul II, 20. Hereafter CT). *“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity”* (CT, 5).

How are catechists to teach in a way that leads children and young people into communion with Jesus Christ?

1. Holiness of life is essential in order for the catechist’s teaching to bring others into intimacy with Jesus Christ. Catechists must first and foremost be witnesses. *“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”* (Pope Paul VI, EN, 41). Thus, a parish or school catechist must first be a practicing Catholic, that is, *“a Catholic in good standing who participates fully in the worship and life of the Church, and who understands and accepts the teachings of the Church and moral demands of the Gospel, as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church”* (*Standards For Educators in Catholic Parishes and Schools*, Wisconsin Catholic Conference, 2008, 3). They must also be *“prepared for their apostolate by appropriate catechetical training* (Diocesan Certification) and their spiritual life should be characterized by a *“love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and of Christ’s Church, our Holy Father, and God’s holy people,”* a personal prayer life, missionary zeal, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (See *The National Directory for Catechesis*, pp. 228-229, 231).
2. An overview of Salvation History is to be presented at the beginning of each grade. Each and every teaching of the Faith that follows should be presented in light of this Story of God’s Plan for us (*The General Directory for Catechesis*, 128. Hereafter, GDC). This gives students the context for all the content of our catechesis.
3. The doctrinal content of our standards and thus our overall catechesis is found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which is the *“sure norm for teaching the Faith”* (GDC, 121). All Catholic School administrators, teachers, DRE’s, CRE’s, catechists and Youth Ministers should regularly utilize the *Catechism* when teaching the Faith (GDC, 121).
4. The generous utilization of Sacred Scripture should have a pre-eminent position in all of our catechesis. The students need to know that the teachings of the Church flow from Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition which together constitute the *“supreme rule of faith”* (*Dei Verbum*, 21). When the word of God is spoken, grace is given, and students authentically encounter Jesus Christ. While forming our children in the Catholic faith is an honor and a privilege, we must also acknowledge that this task cannot be accomplished solely through the dedicated efforts of parish priests, catechists, and Catholic school teachers, but resides most importantly in the amount of time and effort parents devote to learning and practicing the faith at home.

Catechetical standards and benchmarks identify the expectations for the formation of Catholic youth and include specific grade level competencies that every youth should know and be able to demonstrate. They are intended to strengthen the partnership between the primary educators of children—the parents—and the supporting educators of children—Catholic parish and school personnel. These standards and benchmarks will assist parents and catechists to work together toward these learning competencies and the creative developing of different curriculum to ensure successful catechesis and thus, most naturally, a deeper *communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ* the Savior of the World.

1st Grade

Characteristics of a 1st grade Child

- ◇ Is able to attend to and engage in classroom activities for longer than kindergarten
- ◇ Thrive in a structured environment
- ◇ Learning to read and write and other related intellectual skills
- ◇ Memorization is helpful tool for children to learn at this age
- ◇ They understand the concept of “story” and can retell them from beginning to end
- ◇ Some may even begin to interpret the “moral” or “lesson” to be taught in the story. Others can be told the moral and understanding of that moral can be achieved.
- ◇ Is moving from ego-centric behavior toward an awareness of others.
- ◇ Entering with excitement into peer groups/exercising social skills that develop friendships
- ◇ May need guidance in handling conflict, boundaries and social skills among peers
- ◇ Recognizes basic unity of society is family and that he/she is part of a family
- ◇ Recognizes that friends and family are special and different than strangers
- ◇ Enjoy being part of the “action”, like to be first and like to win
- ◇ Recognizes differences between “good” and “bad”
- ◇ Self worth is fragile, so children must corrected and disciplined in a manner in which their self worth is not damaged
- ◇ Moving further along in the Obedience and Punishment phase: they are beginning to understand on their own when something is wrong.
- ◇ May fall into a “tattling” habit at this age

Faith & Moral Development Characteristics/Needs

- ◇ Six year olds, in order to develop spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially need to be loved so as to love. Faith has its roots in love.
- ◇ Faith, Hope and Love must be taught and fostered at this age
- ◇ Security and belonging is important at this age
- ◇ Recognizes that he/she belongs to the family of God
- ◇ Should be taught the stories of their family in faith (stories first from Scripture then from the Church and the lives of the saints)
- ◇ Needs to be recognized and appreciated as a unique individual created in God’s image and is precious
- ◇ Are capable of recognizing symbols of liturgy
- ◇ Tour of the Church
- ◇ Sacred Vessels
- ◇ Sacramentals: rosary, holy water etc
- ◇ Needs to be involved in group prayer and religious activities & needs to be taught and encouraged to do one on one prayer.
- ◇ Are able to learn virtue through different training opportunities: Virtues are like muscles, they develop as we use them

- ◇ Obedience, generosity, Kindness, prudence
- ◇ Can be taught virtues from Jesus and other models from scripture and their own lives. In these models they can be taught that faith is lived through action & pray
- ◇ Lives of saints, priests, Parents, Grandparents, teachers
- ◇ Is able to show respect and love for others because that is the “good” and “right” thing to do
- ◇ Are capable of understanding that actions have consequences
- ◇ Need to be taught to be responsible and independent making decisions so as not to cause unwanted consequences
- ◇ Opportunities for self reflection are possible
- ◇ Is able to ask and give forgiveness
- ◇ Beginning to identify when another is in need and they should help
- ◇ Need to begin to learn the structure of the Church Hierarchy
- ◇ Should be encouraged to ask the question: What does God want me to be? (we must begin to instill in them the concept of God as a divine architect of our lives)

Catechetical Implications

- ◇ As a prime role model for the Children, the teacher of the faith needs to have a strong relationship with God through prayer and active involvement with a faith community.
- ◇ Catechists should be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church

God's Plan of Salvation History

It is very important that before you dive into the curriculum and the catechetical standards that the year be introduced by the Story. The context of the Story of salvation History will provide the proper foundation for the rest of your catechetical instruction. The Story can be taught as a one day lesson, or a week long lesson. Each teacher must make a determination of how long they will take to present the Story to their students. Work in the Textbook should not begin until your students have their story-God's story of Salvation History. An overview of God's Plan of Salvation History is to be presented at the beginning of each year. Please make the presentation appropriate to the grade level.

1. God is a communion of Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three Persons in one God is the Blessed Trinity. God has no beginning and no end. (CCC 234, 232, 237)
2. God is our Father Who loves us and cares for us. God created each person to be united with Him. (CCC 426, 301, 759, 305, 375, 2014)
3. God created everything out of nothing. (CCC 296-298, 338)
4. God created angels as spiritual beings. Angels are God's messengers. We all have our own personal guardian angel. Our guardian angel keeps constant, watchful care over us and guides us and protects us on our journey to God in Heaven. (CCC 328-329, 331-333, 336)
5. All of the angels were put to a test to see if they would be faithful to God. Lucifer and some of the angels completely rejected God and they became Satan and his demons. (Revelation 12:7-9) (CCC 391-395)
6. God created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness. He created Adam and Eve and the whole human race to know, love and serve Him so that we can be united with Him both here and forever in Heaven. Adam and Eve were united fully with God through sanctifying grace within their souls, a participation in God's Divine Life. (CCC, 362-366, 356-357, 374-376, 1934)
7. Adam and Eve were put to a test to see if they would be faithful to God. Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan and they disobeyed God. The first sin of Adam and Eve (the Original Sin) separated them from God. They and all their descendants lost the union with God that they had been created for. They no longer had sanctifying grace within their souls. (CCC 396-400, 402-406, 418)
8. God alone could fix the problem of sin and reunite mankind with Himself. Thankfully, God promised a Savior (Genesis 3:15). Only the Savior could bring us back to the purpose for which we were created being united with God (communion with God). In the Old Testament, God began to form His people through Abraham. Moses was given the Law so that the people knew how to live in order to be faithful to the one true God. The Israelites could not be faithful to the God's Law because they did not have sanctifying grace, a share in God's life, to strengthen them. The prophets told the people to prepare for the Messiah, Who would bring about a salvation which would include all the nations. Through the Savior, God would keep His promise to reunite us with Himself as adopted children. (CCC 410-412, 420-421, 54-64, 2570-2589)
9. Jesus is God. Jesus was born as man on the first Christmas as our Savior. This is called the Incarnation. (CCC 464, 461, 463, 443-445)
10. Mary's "yes" to God to be the Mother of Jesus made our salvation possible. Since Mary is the Mother of Jesus and Jesus is God, we rightly call Mary the Mother of God. (CCC 494-495, 497, 509, 485, 723)

- 11.** Jesus began the foundation of the Church by preaching the Good News, instituting the seven sacraments and establishing the Church with a structure. The structure consisted of the twelve Apostles with Peter as the head. (CCC 763-766, 759, 1114)
- 12.** Jesus suffered, died on the cross and rose on Easter Sunday. Jesus did this to save us from the power of sin and death and to reunite us with Himself. (CCC 612, 616, 619, 629, 639-640, 654)
- 13.** The Church was born from the flow of blood and water from the open side of the crucified Christ: the water of Baptism and the Blood of the Eucharist. (CCC 766)
- 14.** Christ's work of redemption was accomplished primarily by His Suffering, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. These four events are called the Paschal Mystery. (CCC 1067)
- 15.** Forty days after the Resurrection Jesus ascended to His Father, which we celebrate on the Ascension. Ten days later, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to remain with us until the end of time. (CCC 665, 731-732, 233)
- 16.** At Pentecost the Holy Spirit strengthened the Apostles to imitate Christ. The Holy Spirit empowered them to administer the Sacraments, to teach what Jesus had taught them and to lead the Church. Pentecost is when we celebrate the public manifestation of the Catholic Church. (CCC 767, 747, 771-773, 1585, 780, 1076)
- 17.** This was the first time that mankind received sanctifying grace, a participation in God's Divine Life, since the original sin of Adam and Eve. We are only able to live the Christian life with the aid of supernatural grace received through the Church by the Sacraments and from actual grace through a life of daily prayer. (CCC 1226-1228, 1265-1266, 747, 1996-2000)
- 18.** Jesus will come again in glory with the Kingdom of God in its fullness. He will judge the living and the dead and those who have chosen to follow Jesus will reign forever with Him. He will bring His Family into full union with Him and put an end to suffering and death forever. (CCC 1040, 1042-1045)

Creed – Profession of Faith

Section One: the Creed pertains to what God, our heavenly Father has revealed about Himself and His Plan for our Salvation (saving us from Sin) and sanctification (making us Holy) through Jesus Christ His Son by the Power of the Holy Spirit. God has acted first. Faith is our response to what God has revealed. These Truths are gathered together in the Creed.

Catholic school/parish catechetical students in the Diocese of Madison will know and understand the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ in His Church, according to the articles of our Profession of Faith.

A. Understand revelation as God’s action to make Himself known in creation, in his relationship with Israel, and in the Person of Jesus Christ.

1. Know and retell the Story of Salvation History
2. Illustrate how we can know God through his creations, “... from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their creator.” (CCC 41)

B. Understand Faith as an assent to God who reveals Himself.

1. Explain that there is only one God; He has no beginning and no end. He is 3 persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (CCC 232, 234, 237)
2. Explain why God made us. (CCC 27)
3. Explain that God loves everyone and wants everyone to know him. (CCC 52)

C. Understand Sacred Scripture as witness to God’s Self-Revelation.

1. God is revealed in Sacred Scripture, we learn about him when we read the bible.
2. Listen and generally retell the Bible stories of:
 - a. Easter (Jn 20:1-20, Lk. 24:13-35: 1-20; CCC 1169)
 - b. creation of the world, and of man and woman (Gen. 1-3; CCC 290-91),
3. Identify that God speaks to us in Sacred Scripture. (CCC 104)
4. Explain that Sacred Scripture is the story of God’s people. (CCC 101-104)Spirit.” (CCC 232, 265)

D. Be familiar with the structure and contents of Sacred Scripture and be able to use it.

Not at this level

E. Know and understand the articles of the Apostles' Creed.

"I Believe in God the Father"

1. Recognize that God is Love, He never stops loving us. (CCC 218-21)
2. Recognize that God is our Father. (CCC 239-40)
3. Recognize that God is our creator and created all things. (CCC 295)
4. Recognize and explain how God takes care of all that he has made. (CCC 301)
5. Recognize and explain that every person has a guardian angel. (CCC 336, 352)
6. Express how we sometimes do something wrong and have to admit to our actions without making excuses. (CCC 387, 386)

"I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God"

7. Explain that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (CCC 457)
8. Discuss that Jesus showed us how to live. (CCC 459)
9. Recognize that Mary is the mother of Jesus and our mother. (CCC 501)
10. Describe Jesus' Holy Family - Joseph, foster father of Jesus; Mary, Jesus' mother; and, the child Jesus. (CCC 532)
11. Describe how Jesus teaches us the truth about God. Jesus performed miracles, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and rose from the dead. (CCC 547-49, 639)

"I Believe in the Holy Spirit."

12. Explain how Holy Spirit is the expression of God's love for us. (CCC 733)

"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church"

13. Recognize that those who follow Jesus form his true family. (CCC 764)
14. Articulate that God forms his family that we may together grow and serve him in holiness. (CCC 781)
15. Explain how we are initiated into God's family through Baptism. (CCC 1213)

"I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins."

Not at this level.

"I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body".

Not at this level.

"I Believe in Life Everlasting."

16. Explain that God made us to be perfectly happy with him in heaven. (CCC 1023 – 24)

Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

Section two pertains to the way God continues to make available to us His grace won for us by Jesus' saving Death and Resurrection. We receive God's saving grace in the sacraments which are actions of God to bring us into communion with Him and to strengthen us to remain in communion with Him. He has given us a share in His divine life-for no other reason than He loves us. We need to respond to the grace God gives us in the Sacraments.

Catholic school/parish catechetical students in the Diocese of Madison will know and appreciate the centrality of the Eucharist and the importance of the sacraments in the life of Catholics.

F. Understand and participate in liturgical seasons, feasts, and celebrations. (CCC 1076-1199, 1273)

1. Recall that during Mass we thank and bless God, who is our Father. (CCC 1083)
2. Explain that the church building is the house of God and a house of prayer. (CCC 1180-81, 1198-99)
3. Identify liturgical seasons. (CCC 1171)

G. Name, define, and describe each of the seven sacraments of the Church and will know how to participate in the celebration of each (CCC Baptism 1210-84, Confirmation 1285-1321, Eucharist 1322-1419, Reconciliation 1422-98, Anointing of the Sick 1499-1532, Holy Orders 1536-1600, Matrimony 1601-66)

1. Recall that blessing yourself with holy water is a reminder of your Baptism, and prepares us to receive God's grace. (CCC 1667-68, 1670)
2. Explain that the Eucharist is the center of our celebration of the Mass and a sign of God's love for us. (CCC 1380)
3. Explain that Jesus remains in the Eucharist so we can visit him and receive his love. (CCC 1380)
4. Recognize that sometimes we hurt one another and God, and must say we're sorry. When we do, God is always ready to forgive us. (CCC 1440, 1465)
5. Recognize and identify symbols/sacramentals used in the Church (cross, tabernacle, candles, water). (CCC 1667)
6. Recognize that the heart of the family is married love. (1652-53)

H. Understand the Eucharist has a special and central place in the life of the Church and in their own lives because it contains the very act of redemption which Jesus accomplished in his life, death, and resurrection. (CCC: 1322-1419)

1. Recognize Jesus in the tabernacle and genuflect as a sign of adoration. (CCC 1378-9)
2. Explain that Sunday is the Lord's Day and we are expected to attend Mass on Sundays. (CCC 2172, 2174-76)
3. Recognize and apply Liturgical gestures (kneeling, standing, folding hands, bless with holy water). (CCC 1153-55, 1208)

Morality –Life in Christ

Section three is about how we should respond to Jesus' love by the way we live. As his children, we should live as he has asked. The moral life is not an arbitrary list of rules, but laws of love that help us to know how to live to stay close to Jesus. Living life as Jesus asks us to live leads to true joy and peace.

Catholic school/parish catechetical students in the Diocese of Madison will understand and reflect the dignity of the human person and his vocation to freely know, love and serve God and neighbor. With the help of grace, they will seek holiness by avoiding sin, growing in virtue, and entrusting themselves to the mercy of God.

I. Understand the dignity of every human person stemming from their creation in the image and likeness of God. (CCC 1691-1876)

1. State that we are created to know, love and serve God and neighbor. (CCC 1719-26)
2. Discuss the story of creation, articulating that God created all things from nothing and that creation is good. (Gen. 1-3).
3. Describe sin as being an offense against God. (CCC 1849-50, 1871)
4. Give examples of good habits. (CCC 1803)
5. Explain that God's family includes people of all races, languages and abilities. (CCC 1934-35)
6. State that God's rules (law) are his fatherly instruction to us. (CCC 1950, 1975)

J. Understand that the human person is made for communion, both with God and the human community. (CCC 1877-1948)

1. Give examples of how our own behavior affects others. (CCC 1877-1896)
2. Give examples of how the lives of saints show love of God and concern for others.

K. Understand that wounded by sin, man needs salvation by God who comes to him in Christ who teaches us the law of love and recreates us in his image through the gift of his grace. (CCC 1949-2051)

Not at this level.

L. Understand how to judge the morality of acts and how the conscience is properly formed. (CCC 1730-1802)

Not at this level.

M. Understand the Ten Commandments. (CCC 2052-2557)

1. Identify the Ten Commandments as God's rules. (CCC 2052-2082)

1st Commandment

2. Explain that we must love God our Father more than anything. (CCC 2083, 2113)

2nd Commandment

3. Explain that God's name is holy. (CCC 2142-2167)

3rd Commandment

4th Commandment

5th Commandment

6th Commandment

4. Identify love as the vocation of every human being. (CCC 2392)

7th Commandment

5. Explain that we must respect the property of others. (CCC2401, 2454)

8th Commandment

6. Identify lying as a sin. (CCC 2464, 2505)

9th Commandment

10th Commandment

Christian Prayer

Prayer is an essential way we respond to God who loved us first. Prayer is necessary if we are to know God personally and to do His will. Living the Christian Life is almost impossible without prayer.

Catholic school/parish catechetical students in the Diocese of Madison will understand the revelation and tradition of the Catholic life of prayer.

N. Understand what prayer is and the revelation of prayer. (CCC 2559 – 2649)

1. Articulate a personal prayer of intercession (for others). (CCC 2634)

O. Understand the Catholic Christian tradition of prayer (CCC 2650 – 2696)

1. Describe the church building as a special place to pray both within the Mass and outside of Mass. (CCC 2691, 2696)

P. Understand and experience the Catholic Christian life of prayer (CCC 2697 – 2758)

1. Demonstrate that prayers with words can be said aloud or silently. (CCC 2700-04, 2722)
2. Recite *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*.

Q. Understand the Lord's prayer as a summary of the whole gospel and its many uses within the Christian life (CCC 2759 – 2865)

1. Explain why we pray "Our Father" rather than "My Father" (because we open ourselves to loving everyone and acknowledge that God loves everyone). (CCC 2792-93, 2801)

Prayers to Learn

Children in First Grade should be introduced to the new prayers and encouraged to practice the previously learned prayers. They should be able to recite with some guidance. Prayers in bold are the new prayers added this school year:

1. Sign of the Cross
2. Our Father
3. Hail Mary
4. **Glory Be**
5. Prayer before meals
6. **Prayer to Guardian Angel**
7. **Introduce the Rosary: Joyful Mysteries**
8. Mass responses: “Amen”; “Alleluia”; “Lord, hear our Prayer”; “**Lamb of God**”

Children of this age group should be participating in the following forms of prayer:

1. Spontaneous Prayer
2. Gestures: Genuflection, Sign of the Cross, blessing oneself with Holy water
3. Song as prayer
4. Reflection: thinking about God and listening while reading from Scripture
5. Silence: at Mass or in the Church (beginning to develop a sense of reverence)
6. **Participate in a Decade of the Rosary/Introduce Joyful mysteries**
7. **Saint intercession**

Children of this age should know and recognize the following sacramentals:

1. Crucifix
2. Bible
3. Images of Jesus & Mary
4. **Rosary—as a way to pray with Mary**
5. Items in the Church: Tabernacle, Presider’s chair, Holy Water font, Crucifix, candles (method of prayer), **Chalice, Altar**

Vocations

From the moment of our baptism, God has a special plan for each of us. God calls us to life in Christ, in order that, with Christ, we may offer our whole life in love of God and our neighbor. At our confirmation, God strengthens and increases that the life of the Holy Spirit within us, so that we will have the inspiration and strength to respond to God's call.

The official definition of the word vocation according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church is: The calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. God has created the human person to love and serve him; the fulfillment of this vocation is eternal happiness (CCC 1, 358, 1700). Christ calls the faithful to perfection and holiness (CCC 825). The Vocation of the laity consists in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will (CCC 898). Priestly and religious vocations are dedicated to the service of the Church as the universal sacrament of Salvation (873, 931).

In First Grade the children should be taught the church's teaching on vocations as an independent session or incorporated into a daily plan. They should specifically learn: God calls each person by name and has a special plan for his/her life. Every Christian is called by God to be holy, to love and serve God and his/her neighbor with the help of His grace. Each person is invited to a personal friendship with Jesus. It is also important that the children are taught that some people are called to **married**, some to remain **single**, some to the **priesthood** and some to the **religious life** (sisters & brothers).

Bible and Catechism

Children in First Grade should have an understanding the Bible is a Holy book and God's Word for us. They should be read to from scripture and should see it regularly in the classroom. They should learn to be reverent when using or listening to scripture.

Prayers

The Holy Rosary

Start by making the sign of the Cross:

Then recite the Creed:

Then say 1 "Our Father", 3 "Hail Mary's" for the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; and then 1 "Glory Be":

The Rosary is divided into three parts, each having five mysteries.

While meditating on the Mysteries, recite:

1 "Our Father"

10 "Hail Mary's" and

1 "Glory Be"

for each Mystery. After each Mystery the "Fatima Prayer" is said.

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fire of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy.

All together this makes up one decade.

Mysteries of the Rosary

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

(Mondays and Saturdays, may be said on Sundays during Advent and Christmas):

- 1. The Annunciation*
- 2. The Visitation*
- 3. The Nativity*
- 4. The Presentation*
- 5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple*

Prayer to Guardian Angel

*Angel of God,
my guardian dear,
To whom God's love
commits me here,
Ever this day,
be at my side,
To light and guard,
Rule and guide.*

Amen.