

ELEMENTARY RELIGION CURRICULUM GUIDELINES
FEBRUARY, 2012

DIOCESE OF TRENTON

Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines

Grade One

Diocese of Trenton - 2012

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Introduction

Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines

Vision

The Diocese of Trenton, understanding its essential role of evangelization – to build and sustain the Catholic Church in today’s world and to create a legacy of faith for future generations, calls its catechists to actively proclaim, model and nurture the Good News of Salvation. It seeks to dynamically fulfill the mission to “make disciples of all nations,” “to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” “to teach observance of all the Lord has commanded us,” and “to know that God is with us always, until the end of time.” (Mt 28: 19-20)

Realizing that the Lord’s missionary command charges all catechists to teach in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines seek to assist in the formation of mature disciples by imparting a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the faith, promoting active participation in the liturgical life of the Church, integrating moral formation into a Christian way of life, teaching the rich tradition of prayer and devotion, educating toward a Christian integration of community life, and inculcating a missionary spirit that prepares Christians to witness Christ in society. (NDC: 2005, 60 -62)

Purpose

Religion Curriculum Guidelines provide a framework for catechists to plan, instruct and assess students by providing objectives that support the teachings of the Catholic Church in an atmosphere of multi-cultural diversity within parish Religious Education Programs, Catholic Schools and any other venues where catechesis is offered.

The General Directory of Catechesis articulates six tasks (GDC: 1997, #85) that provide the umbrella for religion curriculum objectives that comprise each grade level and are offered for introduction at lower grade levels and development as a child progresses on the faith journey. These tasks include:

- Promoting knowledge of the faith
 - Helping children to know, understand and integrate Catholic beliefs which are found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
- Liturgical education
 - Helping children to know how the Church worships through full and conscious participation at Mass ad para-liturgies.
- Moral formation

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- Helping children to recognize, understand and express that each person is called as a disciple of Jesus to love, forgive and serve others.
- Teaching to pray
 - Helping children to learn to pray the way Jesus did: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication, and awe.
- Education for community life
 - Building a sense of community life in order to come to an understanding of the Church as Communal life.
- Missionary initiation
 - Assisting children to become disciples of Christ, active in society and able to witness to, share their faith, and act on behalf of that faith for charity and justice.

It is the hope that all Religious Education programs will offer faith formation courses that are not only comprehensive in knowledge of the faith but instrumental in leading all students to a love of God and an active participation in the life of the Church. Since every culture brings unique expressions of faith to society, every religious education program should strive to be sensitive to cultural diversity and incorporate the prayers and traditions of their multi- ethnic populations.

The Goals of Catechesis

The goals of catechesis for elementary school catechists emanate from the three major goals of adult catechesis as proposed in the Church document: *Our Hearts Were Burning within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*.

Specifically, these goals include:

- 1) to invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in holiness of life,
- 2) to promote and support active membership in the Christian Community, and,
- 3) to call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world. (OHWB: 2005, #68, 70, 72)

Curriculum Guidelines for elementary religious education facilitate the accomplishment of the broader goals for catechesis. The process of evangelization to proclaim the Word and hand it down to future generations is key to every vibrant religious education program. “Evangelizing is, in fact, the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.” (EN: 1975, #14) An integral element in catechesis is learning by discipleship. Curriculum guidelines strive to bring about that conversion to Jesus Christ that fosters an active decision to walk in the steps of Jesus. Religious literacy for every student of the Gospel should be a priority so that they will know the truths of the faith and be able to communicate them with clarity. Finally, religious education guidelines should engender the concept of life long faith formation since faith is a journey that begins at Baptism and ends when we are welcomed home to the Father.

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With the three major goals of catechesis as an umbrella, religion curriculum guidelines need to support major objectives that encompass a comprehensive learning and living of the faith. Catechesis should be systematic and comprehensive so that children will be taught all the truths of the faith (i.e. the objective truths revealed by God in the life and work of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Apostles continuing to our day in the Magisterium). Every grade should offer appropriate key concepts and knowledge that support the six tasks of catechesis mentioned in the “Purpose” for Religion Education Guidelines. The “tasks,” if accomplished, will send out to the world disciples who know the faith, live the faith, and have missionary zeal to pass it on to future generations. These disciples will actively participate in the liturgical and communal life of the parish and have a universal understanding of the Church’s rightful place in the modern world.

The Catechumenate as Inspiration for All Catechesis

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC: 1997, #90) reminds us that the baptismal catechumenate is the model for catechizing. It adds that we should take note of “those elements of the catechumenate which must inspire contemporary catechesis.”

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA: 1988 Edition) has four stages:

- 1) the Pre-catechumenate – a time of inquiry and welcoming,
- 2) the Catechumenate – the time to learn what it means to be a Catholic Christian,
- 3) the Purification and Illumination – a time of intensified spiritual preparation, and
- 4) the Mystagogy – the time after Initiation to understand more deeply the mysteries; intensify commitment to parish life and on-going formation.

It is the hope of the Church that all Christians will draw inspiration from the Catechumenate and that all catechesis will instill a personal conversion and a deepened response to the baptismal call to holiness.

The Role of the Catechist

The primary catechetical goal of the catechist is to model God’s love to others. Consequently, the primary requisite of the catechist is a love for God and for children. Further, the role of the catechist is so integral to bringing the Good News of Salvation to the people of God that parishes recognize their sacred role, and indeed, commission catechists yearly before the praying community at Sunday Mass. “The apostolic work of the catechist springs from the Sacrament of Baptism through which all believers come to share in the prophetic ministry of Christ and the evangelizing mission of the Church.” (NDC: 2005, p. 228)

Catechists who are truly effective are practicing Catholics who participate in weekly Eucharistic worship and prepare for their apostolate through personal prayer and regular participation in professional development workshops. The workshops will offer sound

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theology, classroom management skills, an understanding of appropriate age/grade level curriculum objectives and a practical use of textbooks and resources to supplement their teaching.

Catechists, because of their sacred ministry, are called to a personal holiness. Their spiritual lives should be characterized by a love of God, adherence to a regular practice of the faith, personal prayer, missionary zeal, active participation in the parish community and devotion to Mary, the first catechist, and the Holy Eucharist, the source of nourishment for the journey. (NDC: 2005, p. 229)

Catechists require an adequate understanding of prevailing cultures within the community and to teach with sensitivity to them. Catechetical programs need to ensure that the catechists receive assistance in developing knowledge of the faith and traditions that will transmit the message effectively to the diverse students entrusted to them.

Above all, catechists should know that faith is a gift. They are the instruments God has chosen to bestow the gift of faith enriched by knowledge, prayer, and activities fostering an understanding of the Church's traditions.

The Diocese of Trenton is deeply indebted to its catechists and offers its prayerful support for their sacred, ongoing ministry as well as guidelines and opportunities for on-going catechist formation.

The Role of the Parish

The pastor has specific responsibilities that derive from his role as chief catechetical leader of the parish. The pastor shares these catechetical responsibilities with other members of the parish staff. "All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have the duty to provide it." (CT: 1979, 696, #64)

The aforementioned Catechumenal model emphasizes that it is the parish community which catechizes. The parish is the local setting for communal prayer, liturgy, the reception of the sacraments and the works of charity and social justice that every Christian needs to embrace to live out his/her baptismal calling. For children and adults to be fully formed in faith, the pastor needs to ensure that:

- 1) Catechesis is emphasized in a way that is age-appropriate for adults, youth and children;
- 2) A total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with parish councils and catechetical leaders;
- 3) Catechesis for adults is a priority and recognized as the parish's primary mission;
- 4) Catechesis of youth and young adults is situated within a comprehensive plan;

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- 5) Catechists at all levels are well-formed and trained;
- 6) Catechetical formation is available for all language groups;
- 7) The baptismal catechumenate is a vital component in the organization of catechesis in the parish; and,
- 8) The catechumenate is an essential process in the parish and serves as an inspiration for all catechesis. (NDC: 2005, p. 221)

By virtue of baptism everyone who ministers in the parish or has specific responsibility for catechesis is charged to be a model of faith and a person of prayer. As a member of a community called to follow Christ, each will understand his/her responsibility to be a disciple in the total parish community. All should strive to bring parishioners into the fullness of parish life, inviting them to continue on the faith journey begun at Baptism.

The Role of Leadership in Religious Education

Just as effective leadership is integral to the positive outcomes of any organization, so is leadership in formally teaching the truths of the Catholic faith. The Church, in a unique way, calls all pastors, Directors of Religious Education Programs and Principals of Catholic Schools to minister in the footsteps of Jesus, by modeling the faith, practicing it daily and preparing all those who choose to nurture the faith of others through faith formation classes.

Leadership in Catholic faith formation must be well-grounded in the truths of the faith and profess them with zeal. In their leadership roles, they seek to offer professional development and pedagogical assistance to the catechists so that their ministry prepares students to live as Catholics whose faith has been nurtured and enlivened to proclaim the Gospel in everyday living and in liturgical celebrations with the praying community.

Pastors, in their roles as parish leaders, are called to ensure that “a total parish plan for catechesis is developed and implemented in consultation with the parish council and parish catechetical leadership.” The pastor also has “the primary responsibility to ensure that the catechetical needs, goals, and priorities of the parish are identified, articulated and met.” (NDC: 2005, p.221) Pastors, because of their leadership in a variety of parish ministries, often delegate managerial and ministerial aspects of catechetical programs to the Directors of Religious Education and Catholic School Principals while appreciating the serious responsibility of nurturing the spiritual life of every parishioner.

Parish Directors of Religious Education are generally responsible for the overall implementation of every program that comes under the umbrella of faith formation for adults, youth and children. This role includes:

- 1) Planning, implementation, and evaluation of the of the parish catechetical program,
- 2) Recruitment, formation, ongoing development, and evaluation of catechists,

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- 3) Implementation of diocesan and parish catechetical policies and guidelines, including the areas of catechist certification and supervision and administrative policies related to negligence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and the safety and protection of minors,
- 4) Collaboration with the pastor, other parish ministers, and appropriate committees, boards, and councils,
- 5) Assistance in liturgical planning, and,
- 6) Attention to their own personal, spiritual, and professional development. (NDC: 2005, p. 225)

The Catholic School Principal, as a spiritual and catechetical leader of the Catholic School community, is called to:

- 1) Recognize that all members of the faculty and staff are an integral part of the process of religious education,
- 2) Recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church,
- 3) Supervise the performance of and provide for the on-going development of, each teacher who functions as a catechist, i.e., teaches religion,
- 4) Provide opportunities for ongoing catechesis for faculty members,
- 5) Foster a distinctively Christian community among the faculty, students and parents,
- 6) Provide for the spiritual growth of the faculty, and,
- 7) Collaborate with parish, area, and diocesan personnel in planning and implementing programs of total parish catechesis. (NDC: 2005, p. 231)

The Role of Parents and Family

The catechesis given by the parents with the family “precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.” (NDC: 2005, p. 234; CT: 1979, #68)

Catholic parents who bring their children to be baptized are the source of both human life and the life of the Spirit for their children. Since parents bring their children to the sacraments of Christian initiation, they are the primary educators of the faith for them. “Parents catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith.” (NDC: 2005, p. 234) Parents catechize their children by participating in the life of the parish, especially at Sunday Eucharist, by their willingness to evangelize and serve others, and by their participation in daily prayer (NDC: 2005, p. 234). Therefore, the education which takes place in the home is “more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured into periods.” (GDC, 255).

Parents assume their responsibilities to catechize their children at baptism. The parish, in turn, supports this responsibility by offering formal catechetical programs for children to help foster their children’s faith and assist them in preparation for full initiation into the Church with the reception of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. Parents may also choose to catechize their children formally at home, understanding that it is their responsibility to

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teach a course in keeping with the objectives of the parish Religious Education Program. Formal study at home is arranged in consultation with the Pastor and the parish Religious Education leaders.

Parents have a responsibility to be formed in the faith so that they can pass it on to their children. Parishes offer programs to assist parents, especially when they are preparing their children for the reception of sacraments. Parents should also take advantage of Adult Faith Formation programs so that their personal faith journeys can be nurtured, enlivened and enriched.

The Role of the Catholic School

Catholic Schools, by their mission, message and vision, are a rich source for evangelization and a place where the Gospel message is integrated into all the events of the day. “The Catholic School forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith.” (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*: March 19, 1977 #9) It is “not simply an institution which offers academic instruction of high quality, but, even more important, is an effective vehicle of total Christian formation.” (Teach Them, NCCB/USCC: 1976, p.5)

Since Catholic Schools are centers for evangelization, their catechetical programs are essential to their distinctly Catholic identity and character. (NDC: 2005, p. 231) Every member of the faculty, led by a faith-filled principal, is committed to advancing the Gospel message into every aspect of the school day. Catechetical instruction in the Catholic School, to be authentic, should be based on Sacred Scripture and the tenets of faith as articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Religion teachers in Catholic Schools not only teach the Catholic Faith as an academic subject but also bear witness to the truth of what they teach. (NDC: 2005, p.232)

Conscious of the challenges of the 21st century, great care has been taken in the Diocese of Trenton to generate Curriculum Guidelines for every academic discipline. Christian values and ideals are integrated with academic objectives to achieve knowledge that is current, comprehensive and faith-based. Teachers are called to an ongoing professional development that offers adult faith formation and pedagogy, including current technology, to support teaching strategies in every academic area.

Working collaboratively with the parish, the Catholic School affords a daily opportunity for “proclaiming and living the Gospel message, for learning and appreciating the teachings of the Church, for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence and love of the Liturgy, for building community, for prayer, for proper formation of conscience, for the development of virtue, and, for participating in Christian service.” (NDC: 2005, p. 233)

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“By equipping our young people with a sound education, rooted in the Gospel message, the person of Jesus Christ, enriched in the treasured traditions and liturgical practices of our faith, we ensure that they have the foundation to live morally and uprightly in our

complex modern world.” (“Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium,” USCCB, 2005)

Children’s Growth in Faith

Just as all human life has stages of development in the cognitive, psychological, social and physical domains, it is important to recognize that every age has its unique characteristics for faith formation.

The early childhood stage of development is a critical time for religious education and formation, “This age group possesses, in the light of faith and reason, the grace of the beginnings of life, from which valuable possibilities exist, both for the building up of the Church and for the making of a more humane society.” (GDC: 1997, p. 117). When the child comes to school, the Church or the parish, the moment of catechesis is “aimed at inserting him or her organically into the life of the Church. The major thrust of catechesis is to give witness to the faith.” (CT: 1997, 37) When children are very young their frame of reference is strongly influenced by the parish program and the family. Catechesis should be family sensitive and involve, as much as possible, the cooperation and participation of the family. It is a time of moral formation where young children are exploring how and why things work and how they should behave in a variety of situations. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, p. 10)

Primary grade children, K-2, traditionally develop a greater attention span up to 20 minutes. For this group, then, concepts need to be clear, concise and presented one at a time. These children are interested in the concrete and factual rather than the abstract. They are able to participate in community celebrations and appreciate what it means to belong to a group. Catechetical programs for these children need to be designed to include them in liturgical celebrations as well as rituals, prayers and stories from Sacred Scripture. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, p. 19)

The intermediate grade child, Grades 3-5, is described as vibrantly alive, always in motion and full of enthusiasm. These children are on a plateau momentarily, physically and psychologically, though they are showing increased intellectual ability and moral growth. They have greater control over their fine and gross motor skills and enjoy activity and interaction. They show greater evidence of increased intellectual skills of memory and reasoning and are anxious to investigate, observe and draw conclusions. Morally, these children are beginning to show growth in conscience development. They

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are becoming legalistic. The desire to identify with and to be of service to their own community of faith begins to take root at this time. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, pp. 26, 27)

Early adolescents, Grades 6-8, experience a rapid rate of physical growth that influences a high level of self-consciousness and self-awareness. They are also growing intellectually and moving away from concrete thinking to more abstract thought. They may need to question familiar paths, such as, why do they need to go to Mass? Early adolescents have a need for connection, affiliation, and identity. These catechists need to possess a great appreciation and understanding for the adolescent's desire to belong. The Church has an opportunity at this time, to provide a safe haven where the individual can learn about relationships and develop friendships. Therefore, the primary aim of adolescent catechesis is to sponsor youth toward maturity in Catholic Christian faith as a living reality. (*Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines*, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005, pp. 38, 39)

Inculturation

Inculturation is “An ongoing reciprocal process between faith and culture.” It is a way of looking at the customs, rites and rituals of people to discover in them the saving presence of God. (“Who Are My Sisters and Brothers?” – Glossary, USCCB, April 2007)

“In relation to their faith, children/youth need an understanding of the rich ethnic and cultural diversity and universality of the Catholic Church. They need to understand their own culture as well as the cultures of the many people who make up the population of our country. This understanding reaches especially to those who are presently coming to the United States and who may be members of the same parish that the children/youth attend. This mutual cultural knowledge and understanding enriches their practice of the Catholic faith and intensifies their practice of charity in welcoming the stranger with a magnanimous Catholic spirit.” (Diocese of Wilmington – *Curriculum Outcomes for Religious Education*, 2007, p. 8)

Every parish has its distinct cultural make-up that should be celebrated and made a part of the fabric of faith formation. Cultural traditions enrich all the parish members and should be shared with the broader community so that all are welcomed and received with the peace of Christ.

Meeting the Needs of Special Learners

Just as Jesus welcomes the children to come to Him, the local parish should be a welcoming community for everyone, especially those with special needs. Every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness. (GDC: 1997, p. 189) Care will be

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taken that catechetical personnel are chosen for their ability to work with sensitivity and expertise in special education.

Children with special needs have a right to develop a relationship with God that the Christian community should recognize and foster. They should be integrated into ordinary catechetical programs as much as possible. Goals and objectives for these students should be modified, if necessary, so that the students can be assimilated in the regular classes and be active members of the learning community of faith.

Religion Curriculum Guidelines are to be adapted to the special needs children so that they can learn the basic tenets of faith, be part of a praying community, and be fully initiated through the reception of sacraments with their peers.

Since not every special needs student will be able to understand all the truths of the faith, concepts should be presented with clarity and age appropriate vocabulary so that they can partake in faith formation and be able to live their faith to the fullness of their being. In some instances, children may have severe disabilities that do not allow for them to be integrated into a regular class setting. In those instances the catechetical director should strive to provide the family with materials and strategies for home use so their faith journey from Baptism is allowed to progress and flourish. Modified assessments should be available for these students at every level. In the case of severe disabilities, the parish should offer, if possible, handicap accessibility to programs so that the majority of the parishioners can partake in faith formation experiences.

Integrating Family Life Objectives

Family Life is the primary source of grace and education in the Catholic faith. Parents bring their children to the saving waters at Baptism and continue to nurture the faith of children by daily walking the faith journey with them.

The Diocese of Trenton promotes the sacredness of family life by encouraging Religious Education Programs to offer specific lessons that foster family life values. These values consider:

- 1) God's love for us and our love for God
- 2) Loving others as a response to God's love
- 3) Understanding sacrificial love
- 4) Expressing love through vocations
- 5) Promoting a virtuous life, and,
- 6) Choosing and living a chaste life

Religious Education guidelines seek to include objectives that integrate the ideals of traditional Catholic family life curriculum. These ideals come under the umbrella of the six tasks of catechesis, most notably those that foster a knowledge and love of God, a moral formation, and a respect and reverence for the presence of God in each person.

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Objectives on human sexuality are met by the parents in the context of home and family. Parishes should make available parent information programs to assist in teaching human sexuality to their children with a faith perspective consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. “Catechesis on the sixth and ninth commandments includes instruction on the gift of human sexuality, its inherent goodness, and the proper place of that gift within the context of the faithful, fruitful, and life-long marriage.” (NDC: 2005, p. 177)

Alternative Models of Religious Education

The 21st Century often poses challenges to the family and professional lives of the Catholic Community. Since secular educational programs are offering a variety of methods and media and alternate settings to teach students, so too does the Catholic Church need to explore multiple possibilities for instructing students in the Catholic faith. Traditionally, parish Religious Education Programs and Catholic School religion curriculums taught the tenets of the faith in a weekly structure of lessons that effectively covered a course of study by the conclusion of the school year. Today, parishes need to consider the unique needs of their communities and offer programs that will respond to those needs while continuing to provide a comprehensive catechesis.

“Just as Christ instructed his followers according to their capacity to understand the message, the Church must also take serious account of the circumstances and cultures in which the faithful live in order to present the meaning of the Gospel to them in understandable ways.” (NDC: 2005, p.186)

These programs may be intergenerational in nature where adults and children come together in the parish setting to learn about the Catholic faith. They may offer summer programs that run for one or several weeks that instruct the students in the major objectives of a year’s course of study. They may offer intermittent programs that are liturgically seasonal so that the richness of the Church year is shared with students. They may also offer unique programs that pastoral leadership, in consideration of the expressed needs of the community, feels is appropriate to nurture the faith of its parishioners. These programs would also provide a comprehensive set of instructions and events that would meet the basic requirements of passing on the faith and assisting the students to be fully functional Catholics ready to take their places in the praying community.

As alternative models of religious education are considered or arise, they should be shared with the catechetical leadership of the Diocese of Trenton. Professional development programs for catechists should be instituted for these programs to give credence to their viability and prepare the catechists to teach the faith in these alternative settings.

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Assessment instruments/activities should be an integral component of these programs to ensure that the six tasks of catechesis and their associated objective outcomes are accomplished.

Outcome-Based Education

The Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines contain a set of objectives for the children to meet on every grade level. These objectives encompass the six tasks of Catechesis which include:

- 1) Promoting knowledge of the faith
- 2) Liturgical education
- 3) Moral formation
- 4) Teaching to pray
- 5) Education for community life
- 6) Missionary initiation

These tasks as stated in the General Directory of Catechesis (GDC: 1997, #85) provide the framework for the religious education outcomes to be met in every level from Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grades. Catechists, in their planning and preparation, should consider a variety of assessment tools to determine that the objectives of the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines are taught and ultimately learned by the students so that they can pursue their faith journeys to become fully initiated, faith-filled Catholics.

Integrating Technology and Media in the Curriculum

Teaching for the 21st Century compels every catechist to bring the Good News of Salvation to their students through the use of technology and the media in a profound and comprehensive presentation. Today's children have been born into a technological society and are reasonably astute in using multi-media technology in every aspect of their lives. If technology provides an active path for learning and living successfully in the 21st Century, then the religious education program is encouraged to reflect and provide learning experiences that are supported through technology. The Internet can offer endless sources of information and research in the Catholic faith, and the operations systems of computers can provide avenues for expression through word documents, power point presentations, publishing software, podcasts, and a host of other programs that bring the faith to life and make it multi-dimensional.

Professional development in the educational use of technology should be considered by all teachers of religion. Just as there is an expectation that teachers of religion take part in religion certification programs to keep them current in the theology of the Catholic Church, there is an expectation that teachers will be reasonably proficient in using

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technology to effectively deliver the message of faith. Since Internet research can offer an array of possible sites for further study, teachers of religion should also become familiar with sites that are approved by the Church to provide authentic Catholic doctrine. Applicable Internet resources are generally available through approved Diocesan textbook vendors and should be used as tools for appropriate research.

Format for Using the Religion Curriculum Guidelines

In an effort to unify the teaching of religion throughout the Diocese of Trenton, a format for the Grade level chapters was developed by the Religion Curriculum Guidelines Committee to assist the catechists. This format allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the tasks of catechesis and the goals and objectives that comprise each task. It offers each catechist an opportunity to review the goals and objectives in the previous grade while providing a systematic roadmap of the truths of the faith that need to be imparted or reviewed on each grade level. It is the hope that every student who attends catechetical classes on a yearly basis will eventually have a broad understanding of Catholicism - its sacraments, prayers, practices and service orientation. The format for using each grade level of the Religion Curriculum Guidelines includes:

- 1) A Statement of the Grade level,
- 2) A “Before You Begin” section which states the faith development of the child on the given grade level and a review and integration of the concepts from the previous grade,
- 3) A “Student Outcomes” section which states the expectations for the student according to the six tasks of catechesis,
- 4) Scripture for the grade level, and,
- 5) Vocabulary for the grade level. **PLEASE NOTE: Vocabulary words, especially on the younger levels, should not be seen as a list of spelling words, or a list of words for which definitions are to be memorized. They are simply words to which students should be exposed, so that through repetition, the student will become familiar with the concept.**

The format provides a framework for all catechists so that planning appropriate lessons will be effective and the instruction of students enhanced. Students who participate in a Diocesan catechetical program should be well-informed in the truths of the faith and able to take their places as active Catholics in their individual Church communities.

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Grade One

- Before you begin.

Review Concepts and Elements from Previous Grade Level

- Prayers - Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary
- God Loves Us.
- We are members of God's Family.
- We are members of the Church.
- We celebrate God's love in Church; we worship God.
- Saints are God's special friends who do His work on earth.

The Faith Development of the First Grade Child

Faith formation is a developmental process. "The Church's catechetical mission aims to help the faithful of all ages grow in both human and Christian maturity" (*OHWB, no. 64*). The first grade child is curious, spontaneous, and energetic. They believe that God is close to them. Children at this age can learn about faith by active involvement with sensory experiences. They are relational and can respond to Jesus' love for them by the love and respect given by those around them.

Student Outcomes

1. Knowledge of the Faith

The children will continue to grow in their understanding of the Bible:

- a. Respect for the Bible as God's special book (CCC 105)
- b. Stories of God's love for us (CCC 120-21)
- c. The Bible is a collection of stories through which God speaks to us.
- d. The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ. (CCC 124; 128; 514)
- e. Brief introduce the Trinity (CCC 232; 237; 249; 253-56)
- f. God is our Father and Creator. (CCC 240; 242; 279-81)
- g. The Father as the First Person of the Trinity who created us in His image and likeness. (CCC 232-237; 355-60)
- h. Jesus as the Second Person of the Trinity, who died and rose for us (CCC 422-24; 571-73; 599-601; 638-644).
- i. Jesus as the Son of God and Son of Mary. (CCC 441-442; 484-486)
- j. Introduce the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity, who was sent by Jesus to help us. (CCC 683-86; 739)
- k. The Holy Spirit gives us special gifts to help us live our lives. (CCC 733-741)
- l. Jesus chose the Apostles to lead and care for His people. (CCC 857)

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- m. The bishops lead and care for the Church assisted by priests and deacons. (CCC 861; 886; 1557)
- n. Brief introduction of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory.

2. Liturgical Education

The children will grow in their understanding of the People of God by being introduced to the following concepts:

- a. The Church celebrates seven Sacraments. (CCC 1210; 774; 1131)
- b. Baptism as the Sacrament that makes us members of God's family and washes away original sin. (CCC 1213-43)
- c. The signs and symbols of Baptism. (CCC 1234-1243)
- d. The practice of "signing" ourselves with the cross and Holy Water upon entering a Church.
- e. Jesus will always forgive us. There is a special sacrament called Reconciliation, which we use to ask for forgiveness. (CCC 1420-42)
- f. The Eucharist recalls the Last Supper which Jesus shared with His Apostles. (CCC 1323)
- g. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in Holy Communion. (CCC 1381; 1391-94)
- h. We celebrate with God's family at Mass: (CCC 1348-1355)
 - Introduce the prayers of the Mass; Lord Have Mercy, Glory to God, Alleluia, responses, Holy-Holy-Holy, Amen, etc.
 - Introduce the responses of the New Roman Missal: Gloria, Confiteor, Creed, etc.
 - During Mass we listen to God's Word from the Bible.
 - During Mass we pray and sing together.
- i. The Church's Liturgical Year:
 - Advent is a special time of waiting
 - Christmas - The Church celebrates the Birth of Christ
 - Lent - Ashes mark us as followers of Christ who can say we are sorry.
 - Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' death.
 - Easter is a celebration of Jesus' Resurrection.
 - Ordinary Time is when we learn of the life and teachings of Jesus.

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3. Moral Formation

The Children will grow in their ability to:

- a. Explain and love God. (CCC 31; 1877)
- b. Recognize that Jesus taught the Great Commandment which tells us how to love God, ourselves and others and sums up the Ten Commandments. (CCC 2052; 2055)
- c. Show care and love for all people. (CCC 1822-1829)
- d. Take responsibility to care for God's creation.
- e. Recognize sin as turning away from God, hurting ourselves and others. (CCC 1849-1850)
- f. Recognize the need to say, "I'm sorry". (CCC 1451)
- g. Try to live at peace with oneself and others. (CCC 1829)
- h. Learn to develop friendships and share with others.
- i. Make choices and accept responsibility for them. (CCC 1778-80; 1786-89)
- j. Respect the life and dignity of all people. (CCC 1929-33; 2284-87)

4. Teaching to Pray

The children will grow in their ability to:

- a. Pray reverently. (CCC 2558-61)
- b. Recognize that we honor Mary. (CCC 148; 495; 722)
- c. Recognize that the Saints are special people who were close to God. (CCC 823; 828; 946)
- d. Experience prayer as listening, talking to and praising God. (CCC 2559; 2639)
- e. Review the Sign of the Cross, Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, Guardian Angel Prayer and grace at mealtime prayer
- f. Introduce the Glory Be to the Father as a prayer of praise to the Trinity. (CCC 2639)
- g. Express love of God and personal needs in spontaneous prayer. (CCC 2650)
- h. Celebrate rituals and activities which express our Christian beliefs; e.g.: the Advent Wreath, the Christmas Crib and the Stations of the Cross.

5. Education for Community Life

The children will grow in their awareness of their responsibility toward others.

- a. Recognize that all life is special and must be cared for.
- b. Jesus wants us to be models of peace
- c. Jesus wants us to come together as a community united at Mass.

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6. Missionary Initiation

When the words “missionary initiation” are used to describe the sixth task of catechesis, we are not meant to envision it as being at the bottom of the list, a task that we might get to after we accomplish the other five tasks. Rather, “missionary initiation” means preparing to take on the mission of Jesus: to love others, to serve those in need, and, perhaps most importantly, to spread the Good News of salvation. Spreading the Good News is what we call “Evangelizing” and is described by Church leaders as the foundation of the house of the Catholic Faith. The other five tasks build upon it, so that we might see “missionary” and “evangelizing” as adjectives describing each of our five tasks (i.e. missionary or evangelizing “knowledge of the faith,” missionary or evangelizing “liturgical education,” etc.)

The words “missionary” and “evangelization” are sometimes misunderstood by Catholics today. In the past, we spoke of missionaries as those brave saintly people who went off to foreign lands to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of him or the Church (the mission *ad gentes*—“to the nations”). But the truth is that all Catholics are called to evangelize. As early as 1983, Pope John Paul II appealed to the whole church by saying, "...The moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a **new evangelization** and to the *mission ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples." (*Redemptoris Missio*—“*Mission of the Redeemer*,” 3)

What is “new” is the focus on reaching out to those family members and friends that are already in our lives. Every one of us is asked to spread the Good News to others—our children, our peers or even our parents.

To be “missionary” is to be Catholic, to be ready and willing to share our faith with others in everyday life at home, at school, in our neighborhood and our town, with our family, friends, and acquaintances right here, right now. Jesus tells us, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (Jn. 20: 23) Through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (Sacraments of Initiation), we are called and sent to continue Jesus’ mission, to invite everyone to experience his love and forgiveness. To live out this call, we need to think and act like missionaries, like evangelists.

Children in Grade One should be exposed to the following:

- a. Articulate that Jesus asks us to share the Good News of the Gospel and our Catholic faith with those we meet (for this age such sharing would be with mainly relatives and friends). (CCC 905)
- b. Care about and help people in need.

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- c. Participate in mission awareness by supporting the mission “*Ad Gentes*” through prayer, sacrifice, and contributions. The Holy Childhood Association is the principal way to do this.
- d. Be involved in food and clothing drives for the poor.
- e. Remember parishioners who are homebound and in nursing homes.
- f. Learn that people have differences that we should respect.
- g. Never speak words that can harm others.
- h. Say *no* to things that are harmful and uncomfortable.

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Scripture References:

Review the Creation of world and us	Genesis 1:1-31; 2-3
Review the Christmas story	Luke 2: 8-18
Jesus Blesses the Children	Matthew 19: 13-15; Mark 9: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17
The Good Samaritan	Luke 10: 29-39
Jesus loved and helped many people	Mark 8: 22-25; Luke 17: 11-19
The Last Supper	Matthew 26: 17-30; Luke 22: 13-20; Mark 14: 12-26
The Easter Story	John 20: 1-20; Luke 24: 13-35
The Coming of the Spirit	Acts 2:1-4
The Call of the Disciples	Matthew 4: 18 -20
Washing of the Feet	John 13:15

Vocabulary

PLEASE NOTE: Vocabulary words, especially on the younger levels, should not be seen as a list of spelling words, or a list of words for which definitions are to be memorized. They are simply words to which students should be exposed, so that through repetition, the student will become familiar with the concept.

Children will be introduced verbally to the following concepts:

Advent	Priest
Advent Wreath	Reconciliation
Altar	Sacraments
Ashes	Sin
Baptism	Soul
Catholic Church	Stations of the Cross
Church	Worship
Commandments	
Christmas	
Easter Sunday	
Eucharist	
Faith-Sharing	
Saints	
Gospel	
Heaven	
Holy Communion	
Holy Family	
Lent	
Mary	
Ordinary Time	
Original Sin	
Parish	
Peacemaker	
Pentecost	
Pope	

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Saints – Children will be introduced to the following Saints using stories:

Mary
Joseph
Parish Patron Saint

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Catechism of the Catholic Church, (2nd Ed.), 1997. Washington, DC. USCC.

General Directory for Catechesis, 1997, Washington, DC. USCC.

National Directory for Catechesis, 2005, Washington, DC. USCC.

CT - *Catechisi Tradendae*, “On Catechesis in our Time,” Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II, Rome, 1979.

EN - *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “On Evangelization in the Modern World,” Pope Paul VI, Rome, 1975.

“Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States,” USCCB, May 2005.

The New American Bible. Catholic Bible Publishers. 1970.

Vatican Council II Documents, Costello Publishing Co., 1987

Curriculum Outcomes/Religious Education, Diocese of Wilmington, Office of Religious Education, 2007.

Catholic Update, “Helping Our Children Grow in Faith,” St. Anthony’s Messenger, 1982.

Catholic Update, “How God Invites Us to Grow,” St. Anthony’s Messenger, 1987.

Fowler, James, *The Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development*, Harpercollins, 1995.

“Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium,” USCCB, 2005)

Resounding the Good News, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines, Archdiocese of Baltimore 2005.

RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, USCCB, Ritual Texts, 1988 Edition.

“The Catholic School,” The Sacred Congregation for Religious, March 1977.

“Teach Them,” USCCB, April 1976.

“Who Are My Brothers and Sisters?” USCCB, April 2007.

Textbooks: Discovering God’s World, Four Year Olds 2000. N.Y. Sadlier.

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God Made The World, Age Four, 2010, Chicago, IL. Loyola Press.

Stories of God's Love, Ages 4 and 5, 2009. Allen, Texas. RCL/Benziger.

Teacher Edition: Stories of God's Love, Ages 4 and 5, "Who is the Pre-School Child?" pp. 10-11. 2009 Allen, Texas. RCL/Benziger

The Good Shepherd and the Child, Cavalletti, Coulter, Gobbi, Montanaro. 1994. Chicago, IL. Liturgy Training Publications.

The Religious Potential of the Child (6-12 years old). Sofia Cavalletti. 2002. Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, IL. Liturgy Training Publications.

Web Article: "Faith Development: Young School-Aged Children". 2009. Raleigh, N.C. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh.

Textbooks: We Believe: Jesus Shares God's Life, Grade 2. 2004, N.Y. Sadlier.

Blest Are We, Grade 2. 2008. Parsippany, N.J. Silver Burdett Ginn Religion.

Faith First, Grade 2. 2006. Allen, Texas. RCL

Teacher Edition: We Believe, Grade 2. 2004. "The Effective Catechist: Getting to Explain a Second-Grade Child" EC 16-17. N.Y., Sadlier.

The Good Shepherd and the Child, Cavalletti, Coulter, Gobbi, Montanaro. 1994. Chicago, IL. Liturgy Training Publications.

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Web Article: "Faith Development: Young School-Aged Children." 2009. Raleigh, N.C. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh.

Archdiocese of San Francisco, Office of Religious Education/ Catholic Schools Religion Curriculum, 2002

Archdiocese of Atlanta, Religion Curriculum, 2002
Catechism of the Catholic Church, (2nd Ed), 1997. Washington , D.C.
USCC.

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Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer) of the Supreme Pontiff: John Paul II On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, December 7, 1990.

Diocese of Pittsburgh: Secretariat for Education, Department for Catholic Schools, 2006

Principles, Prophecy, and a Pastoral Response: An Overview of Modern Catholic Social Teaching, USCCB, 2001.

Textbook: We Live our Faith as Disciples of Jesus: New York: Sadlier, 2007

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Appendix I

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Instructional references to the Ten Commandments should be incorporated on each level of Religious Education from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight. Simple moral references to “right and wrong” can be inculcated into daily lessons on the Pre-K through First Grade levels. Formal references to specific commandments can be made by grade level as sited in the list that follows.

Grade Two

First Commandment

- By explaining that we try to put God first in our life

Second Commandment

- By emphasizing that God’s name is holy and we must respect it and not use it thoughtlessly

Third Commandment

- By teaching that Catholics have the duty of participating in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation

Fourth Commandment

- By explaining that children must obey their parents or guardians

Fifth Commandment

- By stressing that as Catholics, we are called to be peacemakers in our homes and schools

Sixth Commandment

- By helping the child to understand that the sacrament of marriage makes holy the promise of a man and a woman to love each other as husband and wife

Seventh Commandment

- By teaching that stealing is taking the property of another person without permission

Eighth Commandment

- By emphasizing that lying deliberately is saying what is untrue

Ninth Commandment

- By guiding the students that we must be faithful to those we love

Tenth Commandment

- By helping people to have what they need to live

Grade Three

First Commandment

- By stressing that we worship God above all things

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Second Commandment

- By explaining that “God calls each one by name,” and so everyone’s name is sacred

Third Commandment

- By describing that the Mass that we as Catholics attend on Saturday evening or Sunday morning is a gathering of celebration in fulfillment of God’s law

Fourth Commandment

- By teaching that the family is the “domestic church”
- By explaining to the children that respect and love is to be shown to parents, guardians, brothers, and sisters

Fifth Commandment

- By explaining that every human life is sacred because it has been created in the image of God
- By teaching that Jesus calls us to love even our enemies

Sixth Commandment

- By describing how a husband and wife freely and fully keep their marriage covenant (promise) to faithfully love each other as husband and wife.

Seventh Commandment

- By impressing upon the students that God calls us to be good stewards of the world that He gave us

Eighth Commandment

- By informing the students that flattery and boasting are not permitted

Ninth Commandment

- By teaching respect of the human body as temples of the Holy Spirit

Tenth Commandment

- By presenting the sins of envy and covetousness as evil and sources of many other Sins

Grade Four

First Commandment

- By teaching the children to look upon sacred images with reverence, not for themselves, but for the persons they represent. We respect and revere saints; we worship only God

Second Commandment

- By explaining that blasphemy is using the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints in an offensive way
- By describing that swearing and the use of bad language is a violation of the second commandment

Third Commandment

- By teaching that Catholics must attend Mass on Saturday evening or Sundays and holy days of obligation and make the day holy and prayerful.

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- By telling the children that we, as Catholics, should refrain from all unnecessary work on Sundays, spend time with our families and reach out to the needy.

Fourth Commandment

- By presenting the family as an image of the Trinity
- By describing that the fourth commandment calls us to show love, respect and obedience to our parents at all times especially in their old age

Fifth Commandment

- By imparting that the fifth commandment calls us to respect life from conception to natural death
- By teaching that the fifth commandment opposes murder — the deliberate killing of an innocent person
- By explaining that the fifth commandment teaches that “deliberate *HATRED* is contrary to charity”
- By explaining that the fifth commandment opposes all threats to life: murder, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, etc.

Sixth Commandment

- By discussing that men and women are equal in dignity, yet they have complementary differences
- By teaching that the sixth commandment opposes adultery, the breaking of the promise by a husband or wife to love only the other faithfully and fully
- By teaching that the sixth commandment prohibits us from engaging in any behavior or activity against chastity. It calls us to be pure in thoughts, in speech, and in deed

Seventh Commandment

- By presenting that we must be respectful of what belongs to others. Stealing or cheating violates God’s law

Eighth Commandment

- By teaching that lying for any reason is always wrong
- By explaining that false witness and perjury are grave offenses against truth
- By helping the children to understand that division, people not getting along, is against the will of Christ
- By explaining that misrepresenting people by telling stories against them is wrong

Ninth Commandment

- By teaching that the desiring of your neighbor’s wife or husband is always a sin
- By presenting that the kingdom of God is the presence of God’s love, peace, and justice

Tenth Commandment

- By explaining that desiring of your neighbor’s goods in a wrongful way violates God’s law
- By describing the Ten Commandments as part of the covenant or promise between God and His People in the Old Testament
- By telling the students that the Ten Commandments guide our actions in daily life and lead us to a life of happiness
- By identifying that Jesus’ new law of love tells us we must love God above all things and love others of diverse races, ages, cultures, and abilities

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- By characterizing that the Gospel fulfills the Old Law by orienting its promises to the Kingdom of Heaven

Grade Five

The First Commandment

- By instructing the students that the first commandment calls for faith, hope and charity
- By stressing that the first commandment requires us to pray. Prayer is the opposite of superstition, divinization and magic

The Second Commandment

- By teaching that perjury is taking a false oath; it calls God to witness to a lie

The Third Commandment

- By professing that Catholics have the privilege and duty of attending Sunday Mass; not to do so deliberately is a grave sin.
- By guiding the student to the observance of the Holy Days of Obligation: Mary Mother of God, Ascension, Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, and Christmas

The Fourth Commandment

- By teaching that the family is the first cell of society; a society depends on families and must foster them
- By instructing that as children grow older, they must help their parents as much as they can

The Fifth Commandment

- By professing the respect for life in all its forms from conception to death
- By informing the students that “Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.”
- By cultivating the respect for life — we fight threats against life (murder, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment)
- By respecting our bodies we must take reasonable care of our health
- By learning that “Scandal is a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin.”

The Sixth Commandment

- By realizing that sexuality involves all aspects of the human person
- By becoming aware that chastity is the successful integration of sexuality within the person
- By chastity, we gain mastery over ourselves; this is a life-long task to which all are called
- By becoming followers of Christ who is our model of chastity

The Seventh Commandment

- By learning that when we steal or cheat another, we are bound to make reparation
- By guiding the student that God gave us the animals to use, not to abuse

The Eighth Commandment

- By instructing that a lie or offense against a person’s reputation demands reparation

The Ninth Commandment

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- By informing the students that Catholics respect their bodies, and the bodies of others, as temples of the Holy Spirit

The Tenth Commandment

- By teaching that one should not covet (desire) anything that belongs to one's neighbor

Grade Six

The First Commandment

- By explaining the right to religious liberty is part of human dignity

The Second Commandment

- By discussing that oaths should be taken only when necessary and must be truthful

The Third Commandment

- By recognizing that the Sabbath recalls the completion of the first creation, is a memorial of Israel's liberation from Egypt and has been replaced by Sunday which recalls the Resurrection of Christ, i.e. the beginning of the new creation.

The Fourth Commandment

- By instructing that a family is formed by a man and a woman, united in marriage, and their children; the family exists before the state

The Fifth Commandment

- By inculcating that intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder.
- By stressing "The virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess; the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, or medicine. Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road."
- By emphasizing that terrorism and torture are gravely wrong

The Sixth Commandment

- By discussing that sex is noble and honorable gift from God
- By explaining marriage exists for two ends; the good of the spouses and the transmission of life

The Seventh Commandment

- By teaching the seventh commandment forbids any misuse of another's goods including "deliberate retention of goods lent or of objects lost; business fraud; paying unjust wages; forcing up prices by taking advantage of the ignorance or hardship of another."
- By explaining the seventh commandment requires us to keep promises and contracts
- By discussing the Spiritual Works of Mercy are instructing and advising the ignorant, consoling and comforting the sorrowful, forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently

The Eighth Commandment

- By instructing Catholics must bear witness to their faith; the highest degree of this truthfulness is found in martyrdom
- By emphasizing that the seal of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a secret that must never be broken

The Ninth Commandment

- By stressing the ninth commandment requires purity of heart

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- By instructing that purity is achieved with God's grace, by the practice of temperance, the virtue of chastity and by prayer
- By teaching that the ninth commandment is especially opposed to lust

The Tenth Commandment

- By explaining that envy is a capital sin and the source of many other sins

Grade Seven

The First Commandment

- By explaining that the first commandment binds us to hope in God. Sins opposed to it include despair, presumption and tempting God
- By instructing that we are called to worship God. The perfect sacrifice is the one Christ offered
- By informing that opposed to true worship are idolatry, sacrilege and simony
- By discussing that idolatry means to worship a false God. It also means to put anything in the place of God

The Second Commandment

- By teaching that the name of God should only be used in prayer
- By explaining that swearing violates the commandment to honor God's name

The Third Commandment

- By informing that Sunday fulfills the Sabbath; it is the day of the Resurrection
- By teaching the Sunday Liturgy is the heart of the Church's life. By participating, we show ourselves to be members of the Catholic community

The Fourth Commandment

- By understanding that the family is based on marriage, which exists for the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children
- By recognizing that grown children must support their parents in old age
- By being aware of the duties of a Catholic are to be a good citizen and to build a good and just society. Some responsibilities include paying taxes, voting and defending their country

The Fifth Commandment

- By the discovering that "The use of drugs and alcohol inflicts very grave damage on human health and life....Clandestine production and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices." They constitute direct cooperation with evil
- By understanding that justice and charity lead to peace; injustice to war
- By explaining the Church's teaching "From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is abortion willed as an end or a means, is a crime against life and is gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life."

The Sixth Commandment

- By teaching that the sexual act finds its place only in a life-long marriage; this excludes masturbation, fornication, sex for engaged couples, "living together," trial marriage and adultery

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- By realizing that culture has a great effect on sexual morality, pornography and prostitution
- By understanding that every marriage act must be open to children; this excludes all artificial means of contraception
- By discussing that rape totally degrades sexuality and divorce is a grave offense against the dignity of marriage

• The Seventh Commandment

- By teaching that “access to employment and to professions must be open to all.”
- By clarifying the search for solidarity increasingly has international implications; rich nations must work for the development of poorer nations
- By discussing that to work for the common good in economic and political realities is especially the role of the Catholic laity

The Eighth Commandment

- By recognizing that reputation and honor are aspects of a person’s human dignity. These are injured by rash judgment, detraction and calumny

The Ninth Commandment

- By stressing that purity requires modesty, which recognizes and protects the dignity of the person

The Tenth Commandment

- By teaching that one should not covet (desire) anything that belongs to his/her neighbor

Grade Eight

The First Commandment

- By reviewing that the first commandment calls for love of God above all things; this is opposed to indifference and hatred of God
- By emphasizing that the worship of God is the first act of religion by which we acknowledge God as Creator and Savior, Lord and Master over all that exists; the opposite of this is atheism, which rejects or denies the existence of God

The Second Commandment

- By expounding that God’s name is dishonored in especially grave ways in false oath, perjury, and cursing

The Third Commandment

- By noting that besides participation in Mass, we can sanctify the Lord’s day by prayer, visiting the sick, helping the poor and spending time with the family

The Fourth Commandment

- By instilling that the fourth commandment creates one of the foundations for the Church’s social doctrine
- By presenting the fact that parents must respect their children’s call to vocation
- By directing that Catholics should not obey an immoral command of authority; God must be obeyed first

The Fifth Commandment

- By developing the realization that though innocent human life can never be deliberately taken, there is a legitimate right of self-defense for the individual and society

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- By explaining the adage “Preserving the common good of society requires rendering the aggressor unable to inflict harm.”
- By teaching that the death penalty is permitted only when other means of protecting human lives are not possible. The Church teaches that the cases in which the execution of the offenders is an absolute necessity “are very rare, if not practically non-existent.”
- By inculcating that except for medical reasons, amputations, mutilations, genetic engineering and sterilizations of innocent persons are against the moral law

The Sixth Commandment

- By teaching that homosexual acts, as distinguished from homosexual orientation, are gravely sinful; however, every sign of unjust discrimination against homosexual persons should be avoided
- By instilling that a sacramental marriage is indissoluble

The Seventh Commandment

- By instructing that every person has a right to private property, but it is not absolute because the original destination of material resources is the common good of all
- By directing that in her ministries, the Catholic Church has always shown a preferential love of the poor

The Eighth Commandment

- By explaining that the right to truth is not unconditional. The golden rule tells us when silence is best; this applies especially to personal confidences and professional secrets

The Ninth Commandment

- By enlightening that a Catholic should strive for a culture purified of eroticism, voyeurism and illusion

The Tenth Commandment

- By reflecting that true Christians set their hearts on the kingdom of heaven; this makes them detached from all material things

Resources

CCC – *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, United States Catholic Conference, 1994
GDC – *General Directory for Catechesis*, Sacred Congregation for Clergy, Rome, 1997.
Growing in God’s Covenant, Catechetical Curriculum Guidelines for the Catholic Schools of Pittsburgh, 2005. Diocese of Pittsburgh
NDC – *National Directory for Catechesis*, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C., 2005.

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Appendix II
Texts and Resources

I. Texts in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Ave Maria Press
<http://www.avemariapress.com>
- Ignatius Press
<http://www.ignatius.com>
- Loyola Press
<http://www.loyolapress.com/bookstore.htm>
- Our Sunday Visitor
<http://www.osv.com/>
- RLC-Benzinger
<http://www.rclweb.com/>
- Sadlier
<http://www.Weliveourfaith.com>
- St. Mary's Press
<http://www.smp.org/>

II. Supplemental Resources

- Ascension Press
<http://www.ascensionpress.com/>
- Concordia Publishing House
<http://www.cph.org/>
- E.T. Nedder Publishing
<http://www.nedderpublishing.com>
- Good Apple Publishing Company
<http://teachchildren.com/goodapple.html>
- Liguori Press
<http://www.liguori.org/>
- Pflaum Publishing Group
<http://www.pflaum.com/>
- St Anthony Messenger Press
<http://www.sampbooks.org/>

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III. Retreat Resources

- Diocesan Youth Ministry

IV. Resources for Students with Special Needs

Text Books:

a. Journey with Jesus

1. Cardinal Stritch College – 6801 N. Yates Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217

Reference Books:

b. Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities

1. National Conference of Catholic Bishops

c. Catechesis for the Hearing Impaired: Today & Tomorrow

1. National Catholic Office for the Deaf – 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Springs, MD 20910

d. Teaching the Exceptional Child, Diocese of Trenton, Office of Catholic Persons with Disabilities

Organizations:

e. New Jersey School for the Deaf: “Katzenbach School for the Deaf”

1. <http://www.mkasd.org/>

f. Holy Innocents Society, Diocese of Trenton

g. Office of Persons with Disabilities, Diocese of Trenton

V. Non-English Speaking Texts

- Ave Maria Press
<http://www.avemariapress.com>
- Our Sunday Visitor
<http://www.osv.com/>
- RLC-Benzinger
<http://www.rclweb.com/>
- Sadlier
<http://www.Weliveourfaith.com>

VI. Non –English Supplemental Resources

- Ignatius Press

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<http://www.ignatius.com>

- Loyola Press
<http://www.loyolapress.com/bookstore.htm>
- Pflaum Publishing Group
<http://www.pflaum.com/>
- St Anthony Messenger Press
<http://www.sampbooks.org/>
- St. Mary's Press
<http://www.smp.org/>

VII. Other Websites of Interest

Diocese of Trenton

<http://www.dioceseoftrenton.org>

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org>

Vatican

<http://www.vatican.va/>

Saints, Churches and other information about our Catholic Faith

<http://www.Catholic.com>

Catholic TV and Radio

<http://www.ewtn.com>

Returning or becoming Catholic

<http://www.catholicscomehome.org>

Books, CD's religious Articles

<http://www.pauline.org/>

<http://www.aquinasandmore.com>

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Appendix III

The Prayers and the Tenets of Our Faith

The basic prayers and tenets of our faith are included here as an aid to the catechist with the view of giving an easily accessible and comprehensive view.

Prayers

The Sign of the Cross Mt. 28:19

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CCC #2166

Our Father Mt. 6:9-13

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

CCC #2759, 2761, 2777-2865

Hail Mary Lk. 1:28, 42

Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

CCC #2676-2677

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

CCC #2628

A Morning Prayer

God, our Father, I offer you today all that I think and do and say. I offer it with what was done on earth by Jesus Christ, Your Son. Amen

CCC #2698

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these Your gifts which we are about to receive from Your goodness, through Christ our Lord. Amen

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CCC #2698

Prayer After Meals

We give You thanks, almighty God, for all Your goodness.
You live and reign now and forever. Amen

CCC #269

Acts of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen

CCC #1451

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Roman Missal 3rd Edition

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Roman Missal 3rd Edition

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The Rosary

The Rosary is a meditative prayer. It consists of a series of beads on which we pray traditional prayers such as the Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be while we think about special events in the life of Jesus and Mary, Begin praying the Rosary with the cross. Pray the Sign of the Cross and the Apostles' Creed.

On the first bead pray one Our Father, on the next three beads a Hail Mary each and end with Glory Be to the Father.

Begin the first decade by saying one Our Father and then ten Hail Marys on the row of beads following it.

After the decade pray one Glory Be to the Father. Continue the remaining decades with an Our Father on each single bead and ten (10) Hail Marys on each row of beads. Conclude each decade with a Glory Be to the Father.

As you pray each decade, think of one of the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, or Glorious Mysteries, or a special event in the life of Jesus and Mary.

The Five Joyful Mysteries (*Monday & Saturday*)

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

The Five Luminous Mysteries (*Thursday*)

1. Jesus' Baptism at the Jordan
2. Jesus' Self-manifestation at the Wedding of Cana
3. Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God
4. The Transfiguration
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries (*Tuesday & Friday*)

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death

The Five Glorious Mysteries (*Wednesday & Sunday*)

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles
4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
5. The Crowning of Mary in Heaven

CCC #2708

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Pray the Hail Holy Queen prayer at end the Rosary

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

CCC # 2677

Prayer for the Faithful Departed

Eternal Rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let Perpetual Light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen

CCC #958

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle within them the fire of Your Love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, Who does instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Holy Spirit, a love and relish of what is right and just, and a constant enjoyment of His comforts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CCC #2671

The Way of the Cross (Stations)

The Way of the Cross commemorates the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is condemned to die.
2. Jesus takes up His cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets His Mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry His cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who mourn for him.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

CCC #2669

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Act of Faith

Oh my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because You have revealed them. In this faith I desire to live and die. Amen

Act of Hope

O my God, trusting in Your promises and the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, I hope for the pardon of my sins and the graces I need to serve You faithfully on earth, and to obtain eternal life in heaven. Amen

Act of Love

O my God, I love You above all things with my whole heart and soul, because You are infinitely good and deserving of All my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of You. Amen

CCC #2656-2658

Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for He has looked with favor on His lowly servant, and from this day all generations will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me; Holy is His Name. He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of His arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the help of His servant Israel for He remembered His promise of mercy, the promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever. Amen

CCC #2619

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not seek so much to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand;

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to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Tenets of Our Faith

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Based on Ex. 20:2-17 and Dt. 5:6-21 CCC p. 496 & 497

The Great Commandments

1. You should love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul and with your whole mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27 CCC #2055

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they, who are persecuted for the sake of justice,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:3-10 CCC #1716 25

The Seven Sacraments

Baptism

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Confirmation
Eucharist
Reconciliation
Anointing of the Sick
Holy Orders
Matrimony

CCC #1210

Twelve Apostles

Peter	James
Andrew	Thaddeus
James	Thomas
John	Matthew
Philip	Simon
Bartholomew	Judas Iscariot (replaced by Matthias)

Matthew 10:2-4 Acts 1:21-26 CCC #858

The Cardinal Virtues

Prudence
Justice
Fortitude
Temperance

Wisdom 8:7CCC #1805

The Theological Virtues

Faith
Hope
Charity

1 Cor. 13:13 CCC #1813

Works of Mercy

Corporal

Feed the hungry. Shelter the homeless. Clothe the naked.
Visit the sick and imprisoned. Bury the dead.

Matthew 25:35-40 CCC #2447

Spiritual

Instruct the ignorant. Advise the doubtful. Correct the sinner.
Comfort the afflicted. Forgive offenses. Bear wrongs patiently.
Pray for the living and the dead.

Gal 6:1-2 1 Thes. 5:14-19CCC #2447

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom

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Knowledge
Understanding
Reverence
Courage
Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)
Right Judgment

Is. 11:1-3 CCC #183

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Love	Generosity
Joy	Gentleness
Peace	Faithfulness
Patience	Modesty
Kindness	Self-control
Goodness	Chastity

Gal. 5:22-23 CCC #1832 27

Marks of the Church

One	Catholic
Holy	Apostolic

CCC #865

Eucharistic Fast

General Law: Those preparing to receive Communion must abstain from all food and drink for one hour prior to reception. Exceptions to the Eucharistic Fast: Water may be taken any time before Communion. In the case of sickness, medicine may be taken anytime before reception.

Canon 919

Holy Days of Obligation in the United States

1. Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1)
2. Solemnity of the Ascension (Forty days after Easter)
3. Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15)
4. Solemnity of All Saints (November 1)
5. Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (December 8)
6. Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (December 25)

Canon 1246 CCC #2177

The Precepts of the Church

1. To attend Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligation and to refrain from work and activities which could impede the sanctification of those days;
2. To confess one's sins, receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year;
3. To receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season;
4. To abstain from eating meat and to observe the days of fasting established by the Church;
5. To help to provide for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability.

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CCCC # 432

Days of Penance

All Fridays of Lent

Canon 1250 CCC #1438

General Laws of Fast and Abstinence

Fast: All adults, 18 up to the beginning of their sixtieth (59) year, are bound by the law of fasting. Fasting allows one full meal, but a light breakfast and lunch are not forbidden. Pastors and parents are to see to it that children while not bound to the law of fast and abstinence are educated and introduced to an authentic sense of penance.

Abstinence: All persons 14 years and older are bound by the law of abstinence. Abstinence means not eating meat.

Days of Fast and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Fridays of Lent (abstinence)

On Fridays, when abstinence is not required by law, acts of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety are suggested. Abstinence from meat is especially recommended but under no obligation by law.

Canons 1251-1253 CCC #1434, 2043

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

PENTATEUCH

Genesis (Gn)
Exodus (Ex)
Leviticus (Lv)
Numbers (Nm)
Deuteronomy (Dt)

HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua (Jos)
Judges (Jgs)
Ruth (Ru)
1 Samuel (1Sm)
2 Samuel (2Sm)
1 Kings (1Kgs)
2 Kings (2Kgs)
1 Chronicles (1Chr)
2 Chronicles (2Chr)
Ezra (Ezr)
Nehemiah (Neh)

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Tobit (Tb)
Judith (Jdt)
Esther (Est)
1 Maccabees (1Mc)
2 Maccabees (2Mc)

WISDOM BOOKS

Job (Jb)
Psalms (Ps)
Proverbs (Prv)
Ecclesiastes (Eccl)
Songs of Songs (Sg)
Wisdom (Wis)
Sirach (Sir)

PROPHETIC BOOKS

Isaiah (Is)
Jeremiah (Jer)
Lamentations (Lam)
Baruch (Bar)
Ezekiel (Ez)
Daniel (Dn)
Hosea (Hos)
Joel (Jl)
Amos (Am)
Obadiah (Ob)
Jonah (Jon)
Micah (Mi)
Nahum (Na)
Habakkuk (Hb)
Zephaniah (Zep)
Haggai (Hg)
Zechariah (Zec)
Malachi (Mal)

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

GOSPELS

Matthew (Mt)
Mark (Mk)
Luke (Lk)
John (Jn)
Acts of the Apostles (Acts)

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EPISTLES

Romans (Rom)
1 Corinthians (1Cor)
2 Corinthians (2Cor)
Galatians (Gal)
Ephesians (Eph)
Philippians (Phil)
Colossians (Col)
1 Thessalonians (1Thes)
2 Thessalonians (2Thes)
1 Timothy (1Tm)
2 Timothy (2Tm)
Titus (Ti)
Philemon (Phlm)
Hebrews (Heb)
James (Jas)
1 Peter (1Pt)
2 Peter (2P t)
1 John (1Jn)
2 John (2Jn)
3 John (3Jn)
Jude (Jude)

THE BOOK of REVELATION (Rv)