



GRADE 8 PARENT PAGE

Parents have the unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators or catechists. They teach by their witness of the faith, through their values and attitudes, by their Christian example of love for Christ and his church. When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to raise their children in the practice of the faith...(National Directory for Catechesis 234-235)

Dear Parents,

In a special document entitled *Letter to Families*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators because they are parents"(16). You are the first and best role model for your child in these growing years. Your role as parent to love, teach, and lead your child to Jesus is a remarkable and noble vocation.

Junior High is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially your child is "crossing the bridge" between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one's unique pattern of development. However, there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

Your Child's Faith Development

Eighth graders desire to be actively involved in and are open to service opportunities. They are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God. They look to the Church for the content and expression of faith. As a parent you will want to provide opportunities for "service," "community building," "reflection," and "activity." Eighth graders need both faith structure and flexibility in their religion classes and at home. These young people present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: you, as parents, as well as, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. They have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these young adolescents must be attentive to their special circumstances, needs, and attitudes.

Adolescents:

- ✚ Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image
- ✚ Begin abstract thinking
- ✚ Use a more complex decision making process
- ✚ Can reason based on possibilities not just experience
- ✚ Can be self-conscious and critical
- ✚ Want to belong
- ✚ Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers
- ✚ Seek limited independence
- ✚ Value friendships based on trust and loyalty
- ✚ Reason at conventional levels
- ✚ Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws ,parents, etc.

Our diocese provides many resources and materials that will help you better understand the faith and work with your child at home. Among the resources is the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, an adaptation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For more information contact the Office of Catholic Education at (804) 622-5113 or e-mail Cf@richmonddiocese.org.

How You Can Help Your Child Grow In Faith

This year your child will continue to view the Catholic Church as a faith community given life by the Holy Spirit. He/she will come to realize that it is Christ's presence in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit which gives glory and praise to the Father and brings His redeeming love to all. As Catholics, we claim Jesus as the source of all teaching, sacramental life, our mission, and our ministries. As people of God we continue the mission of Jesus through active and committed participation in the life of the Church. Sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Spirit.

Your child will come to learn that building a strong and realistic concept of him/herself is based on Jesus' vision of being fully human. As God's children, created in His image and likeness, we are called to holiness and eternal life in God's Kingdom. Developing relationships with peers, parents, and other adults should be based on honest, love, and respect, leading us into a deeper life and faith and a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

Here are several points that will assist you over the course of this year, to help your child grow in his/her faith.

- ➔ Attend and participate in Sunday Mass as a family. Afterward, talk about some of the things mentioned in the homily. Once a month, allow your eight grader to select an activity that the family can enjoy after Mass (i.e. dining at a favorite restaurant, attending a special movie, sports activity etc).
- ➔ Help your child identify ways to participate in your parish. Stress the importance of service to others by volunteering our time and talents. Mention the importance of tithing.

Encourage your child (and his/her friends) to become involved in your parish Middle School Ministry Program or Youth Ministry Program. If your parish does not have a program, check with the Office of Youth Ministry <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ym/index.htm>

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- ➔ Discuss ways in which your child can spread the good news about Jesus (i.e. example to others, helping in the community/neighborhood, acts of kindness). Explain that Jesus works through us to reach all people.
- ➔ Help your child become familiar with a Church agency that serves the needs of the community (i.e. food bank, Meals on Wheels, local nursing home).
- ➔ Purchase a teen's Catholic bible as a gift for your child. Encourage him/her to pray often.

Grade 8

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS

Know Your Audience

Just like Jesus, every good catechist knows their audience.

“The catechist – must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.” (NDC #48)

Who Are Your Eighth Graders?

JUNIOR HIGH – Seventh and eighth grade is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially these young people are “crossing the bridge” between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one’s unique pattern of development. However there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Junior High Students:

Physical

- Undergo a growth spurt
- Develop secondary sex characteristics
- Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image

Cognitive

- Begin abstract thinking
- Use a more complex decision making process
- Can reason based on possibilities not just experience
- Can be self-conscious and critical

Identity

- Want to belong
- Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers
- Seek limited independence
- Value friendship based on trust and loyalty

Moral

- Reason at conventional level
- Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws, parents, etc.

Faith

- Desire active involvement and are open to service opportunities
- Are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God

- Look to the Church for the content and expression of faith

Realizing all these factors, a junior high religion program should be one that still involves the concrete, but also provides opportunities for “community building,” “reflection,” and “activity.” These young teens are truly in a transition time. They need both faith structure and flexibility in a religion program.

Junior high school students, who can range in age from 11-15, present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: parents, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. These young people have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these younger adolescents must be attentive to the special circumstances, needs, and attitudes of junior high students. Please visit the Youth Ministry page on the Diocesan website for opportunities and contacts <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ym/index.htm>

NOTES

- ❖ Pope John Paul II in On Catechesis in Our Time encourages the use of advances in pedagogy; biology, sociology as they help us to model God’s Divine Pedagogy (teaching us gradually in stages according to our level of development). The above noted information is consistent with such documents as the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catechetical Documents of the Church.
- ❖ The above sciences have limitations. While this information does provide references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken into account.

Catechetical Curriculum
Grade 8 Key Concepts

Knowledge of Faith	Liturgical Education	Moral Education
<p>Creed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understands God as relational through identity as Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ○ Understands that being created in the image and likeness of God means being created to be a responsible member of a community ○ Understands how the Nicene Creed builds on the Apostles' Creed to clarify the mystery of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior ○ Appreciates the Paschal Mystery as a core doctrine of faith 	<p>Participates regularly in Sunday worship Sacraments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Associates sacraments with life experiences <p>Liturgical Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experiences Liturgy of the Hours <p>Gestures/Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Articulates elements of liturgy: Mass, sacraments, Liturgy of the Hours 	<p>A Disciple of Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates moral decision making based on an informed conscience ○ Articulates social justice issues with an understanding of Gospels values ○ Identifies the theological and cardinal virtues ○ Recognizes social sin as the wrongdoing of a group ○ Identifies the seven capital sins as the root of all sin ○ Realizes that Christian discipleship is counter cultural to society ○ Distinguishes between that which is moral and that which is legal
Scripture		
<p>Matthew 5: 1-12 – Beatitudes</p>	<p>Acts 2: 42-47 – Early Christian Life Ephesians 1: 15-23 – Church as Family</p>	<p>Matthew 5: 14-16 – Bushel Basket Matthew 5: 43-44 – Love for Enemies 1 Corinthians 13: 1-7 – Call to Live Law of Love Matthew 28: 16-20 – Commissioning of Disciples</p>
Vocabulary		
<p>Beatitudes Incarnation Redemption</p>	<p>Benedictus Canticles Evening Prayer</p>	<p>Abortion Adultery Capital sins: pride, greed, lust, anger, envy, gluttony, sloth Cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance Christian morality Discipleship Theological virtues: faith, hope, love</p>

Catechetical Curriculum
Grade 8 Key Concepts

Teaching to Pray	Education for Community Life	Missionary Initiation
<p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Realizes that because they are the living Word of God, scriptures speak to us at every moment of our lives 1. Connects scripture to life issues 2. Appreciates use of Bible for daily prayer <p>Prayers/Precepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Formulates a prayer service based on scripture o Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary <p>Liturgical Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Appreciates need for silence in prayer 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Explores ways the church has responded to cultures and societal needs down through the ages o Recognizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of the church o Examines the role of the laity since Vatican II <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Relates lives of saints, especially, Mary to personal journeys of faith <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identifies roles of members of church community: laity, clergy, etc. o Realizes the importance of principals of Catholic Social Teaching o Recognizes the need to vote with a moral conscience 	<p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Discerns personal gifts and talents that can be used for the common good o Identifies activities/ministries that involve youth o Identifies persons whose lives exemplify the Law of Love (corporal and spiritual works of mercy)
Scripture		
<p>John 20: 1-10 – The Resurrection from the Dead Matthew 28: 16-20 – The Ascension Acts 2: 1-11 – The Descent of the Holy Spirit Luke 1: 45-56 – The Assumption of Mary Revelation 12: 1 – The Coronation of Mary</p>	<p>Isaiah 11: 1-5 – Gifts of the Holy Spirit Galatians 5: 22-23 – Fruits of the Holy Spirit Luke 6: 43-45 – A Tree is Known by its Fruit</p>	
Vocabulary		
<p>Ascension Assumption</p>	<p>Clergy Dogma Infallibility Laity Magisterium</p>	<p>Empathy Gratitude Lumen Gentium Outreach Vatican II</p>

Catechetical Curriculum

Grade 8 Key Concepts

Liturgical Year

ORDINARY TIME (Fall and January)

- KF Understands that being created in the image and likeness of God means being created to be a responsible member of a community Eph 1:15-23 – Church as Family
- KF Understands how the Nicene Creed builds on the Apostles' Creed to clarify the mystery of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior
- LE Articulates elements of liturgy: Mass, sacraments, Liturgy of the Hours
- ME Identifies the theological and cardinal virtues
- CL Explores ways the church has responded to cultures and societal needs down through the ages
- CL Examines the role of the laity since Vatican II
- CL Identifies roles of members of church community: laity, clergy, etc.
- CL Realizes the importance of principles of Catholic Social Teaching Matt 5:1-12 – Beatitudes
- CL Recognizes the need to vote with a moral conscience

ADVENT

- CL Relates lives of saints, especially, Mary to personal journeys of faith Luke 1:46-56 – The Assumption of Mary Rev 12:1 – The Coronation of Mary

CHRISTMAS

- CL Relates lives of saints, especially, Mary to personal journeys of faith

LENT

- ME Articulates social justice issues with an understanding of Gospel values
- ME Recognizes social sin as the wrongdoings of a group Matt 5:14-16 – Bushel Basket
- ME Identifies the seven capital sins as the root of all sin Matt 5:43-44 – Love of Enemies 1 Cor 13:1-7 – Call to live Law of Love
- ME Distinguishes between that which is moral and that which is legal
- ME Realizes the importance of principles of Catholic Social Teaching

EASTER (April – May)

- KF Understands God as relational through identity as Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Acts 2:42-47 – Early Christian Life Matt 28:16-20 – Commissioning of Disciple

- KF Appreciates the Paschal Mystery as a core doctrine of faith-Jn 20:1-10 – The Resurrection from the Dead Matt 28:16-20 – The Ascension
- P Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary
- CL Recognizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of the church- Acts 2:1-11 – The descent of the Holy Spirit Is 11:1-5 – Gifts of the Holy Spirit Gal 5:22-23 – Fruits of the Holy Spirit Luke 6:43-45 – A tree is known by its fruit

AT ALL TIMES

- LE Associates sacraments with life experiences
- LE Articulates elements of liturgy: Mass, sacraments, Liturgy of the Hours
- ME Demonstrates moral decision making based on an informed conscience
- ME Realizes that Christian discipleship is counter cultural to society
- P Realizes that because they are the living Word of God, scriptures speak to us at every moment of our lives
 - Connects scripture to life issues
 - Appreciates use of Bible for daily prayer
- P Formulates a prayer service based on scripture
- P Appreciates need for silence in prayer
- CL Relates lives of saints, especially, Mary to personal journeys of faith
- MI Discern personal gifts and talents that can be used for the common good
- MI Identifies activities/ministries that involve youth
- MI Identifies persons whose lives exemplify the Law of Love (corporal and spiritual works of mercy)

Legend:

K = Knowledge of Faith

LE = Liturgical Education

ME = Moral Education

P = Teaching to Pray

CL = Education for Community Life

MI = Missionary Life