

**Archdiocese of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Religion Curriculum**

**Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry  
Office of Catholic Schools  
Office of Divine Worship**

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With the apostle Peter, we begin the words of this Religion Curriculum designed for the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of (your) faith, the salvation of your souls.  
1 Peter 1: 3-9

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## **HISTORY AND RATIONALE**

The design and writing of the Religion Curriculum resulted from the 2002 *Plan for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Chicago*. Recommendations in the plan called for a more cohesive approach to imparting the faith of the Church for children and youth. The outcome of the recommendations is the Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago engages the student in hearing and understanding the proclamation of the faith and invites the student to respond through deeper openness to a relationship with God. This relationship is expressed in active participation in the life of the Church as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The believer is called to live a life centered on Christ refreshed and nourished by prayer and the sacraments. Recognizing the guidance of the Holy Spirit the student is further challenged to seek his/her role in the Church and society as an active contributor to the common

good of all. Through effective catechesis the student understands and chooses to participate in the Church's mission wherein the Risen Christ anticipates the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 2005, p.6). The rationale for the Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago is to assist the learner in understanding and responding to the fullness of the Christian life.

Thus the Church uses a systematic approach to teach the message of Jesus Christ. "Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life." (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p.6, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 5, quoting *Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 18)

## **CATECHESIS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELIZATION**

In the United States the social reality was and continues to be a broad and diverse amalgam of cultures and languages characterizing the country as a “nation of immigrants.” The Church mission of evangelization occurs within this reality and, as such, coexists with the many communities that are struggling to find a place in the society or that are settled and challenged by the newcomer. Among these communities the Church asserts her mission role to announce the Gospel and invite to conversion those who hear and respond.

Because this country historically has long benefited from the missionary work of the Church, there is a vital and growing Catholic presence. Many baptized continue their lifelong journey in Christ fully participating in the mission of the Church.

At the same time, there are many baptized who have never experienced an effective formation in the faith and, as such deepen only nominally in their understanding and practice of the Christian life. Many have left their moorings from the Church because of disagreements or issues that resulted in separation. Many Catholics identify with their faith by name only but do not participate in the fullness of the life of the Church thus losing the life-giving benefits of communal worship, sacramental participation and service. In this particular context the Church engages in the task of re-evangelization requiring a “permanent catechesis centered around continual conversion.” (NDC, p. 51) Such activity must encompass the whole spectrum of realities from hearing the

word for the first time to the ongoing process of conversion and transformation.

Within the context of evangelization, catechesis is a lifelong ongoing process in which people are invited and formed to be in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ and with each other (GDC 380. 81:CT 5) Catechesis is a “moment” in the evangelization process that specifically “promotes and matures initial conversion, educates persons in the faith, and incorporates them into the life of the Christian community.” (NDC, p. 57) Catechesis, therefore, has as its purpose to “encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith.” (GDC #66; CCC 1229)

The word catechesis comes from the Greek meaning “to echo the teaching” meaning that catechesis or the teaching of the faith is an interactive process in which the word of God resounds between and among the one who proclaims, the one receiving the message, and the Holy Spirit. Catechesis is a process of initial conversion, formation, education, and ongoing conversion. Through word, worship, service and community, it seeks to lead all God’s people to an ever-deepening relationship with God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Catechesis is essentially an action of the Church, an “ecclesial act.” With Mary, the Church treasures the Gospel in her heart. “She (the Church) proclaims it, celebrates it, lives it, and she transmits it in catechesis to all those who have decided to

follow Jesus Christ.” (NDC, p. 56) As such the Church sees catechesis as a “pivotal dimension of the Church’s pastoral activity and a significant element in all the Church does to hand on the faith.” (p. 56)

The Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago incorporates through its stated goals the mission of the Church

to evangelize and to catechize. Through the curriculum goals students are invited to understand the life of faith as expressed in the Living Tradition of the Church and through Sacred Scripture. Through the catechetical process of teaching and learning, students are called to respond to live their lives fully in Christ through active participation in the life of the Church and its mission to the world.

## **CATECHETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS**

Catechesis most effectively transpires when all the elements of catechesis are evident in a catechetical program. Catechetical elements are described in two ways: people and process.

Catechesis is relational, that is, faith development happens in a community. In the following elements, we see how significant personal and communal interaction makes the catechetical process come alive for those being formed in the faith. It takes everyone in the faith community to support the catechetical process from womb to tomb: parents/guardians, parish, ordained ministers, directors of religious education and principals, catechists, teachers, pastoral ministers. The following are catechetical elements that describe the relational aspects.

- ❖ Formative – apprentices people to Jesus Christ and the implications for living a Catholic moral life

- ❖ Community Centered – connects people with the community of faith
- ❖ Developmental – takes people where they are and attends to their spiritual and human development
- ❖ Cultural – gives expression to the gifts of people and the diversity within the community and the universal church
- ❖ Evangelical – motivates people to mission; attends to the transformation of the world in light of social justice
- ❖ Prayer centered – respects personal spirituality and engages people in personal and public prayer
- ❖ Mentor/Sponsor relationship – provides for accompanying people in their faith journey

Catechesis is a process. Effective learning of the faith is a lifelong process that happens when structures are in place to help personal inculcation of the faith to deepen and grow. These elements must support the apprenticeship process

wherein those being formed in Christ have the necessary supports to complete their life in Christ. The following are catechetical elements that provide process for catechesis.

- ❖ Scriptural – shares stories of faith
- ❖ Worship – nurtures the life of faith and connects with how the faith is celebrated in a life of prayer and worship
- ❖ Informational – incorporates a well-developed plan/curriculum for presenting the Gospel message and Catholic teachings
- ❖ Environment – provides space and hospitality that facilitates delivery of the Gospel message
- ❖ Methodologies – attends to various learning styles and uses various strategies to proclaim the message
- ❖ Structural – has a strong and effective leadership and the necessary resources and volunteers

The content of catechesis is built on a theological foundation articulated in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition They are the following.

- ❖ Trinitarian – presents the Holy Trinity as the central mystery of the Christian life and faith
- ❖ Soteriology – presents God’s plan of salvation, what God has done in the past, present and future
- ❖ Christology – presents who Jesus is and the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in living the Christian life
- ❖ Ecclesiology – presents the church as the faithful responsible for continuing the work of salvation
- ❖ Liturgy – nurtures the relationship through prayer, ritual and sacraments
- ❖ Mission – equips for evangelization and impels a compassionate response to the world  
(Cf. GDC Part 2, Ch. 1)

All catechetical models are organized to incorporate the catechetical and theological elements into ways of conveying the message of the faith. A catechetical model is the intentional organization of appropriate and adaptable catechetical elements to meet the needs of the people involved in the catechetical process. Pastors have the responsibility to provide for catechetical models that meet the various needs of parishioners.

## **CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION**

“Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways.” (GDC #105)

Catechists in parish catechetical programs have the privilege of serving the parish as witnesses and teachers of the faith from “womb to tomb.” Most especially catechists teach young people how their lives are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. By growing in the life of faith and teaching skill, they “echo the teaching” of the Scriptures and the Tradition so the Church may fulfill its mission on earth. Catechists engage in one of the most ancient ministries of the Church: the ministry of the word.

The parish community is the “primary experience of the Church” for most Catholics. (NDC, p. 254, GDC. # 158) As such, the parish is the primary locus for the entire catechetical enterprise. “The parish energizes the faithful to carry out Christ’s mission by providing spiritual, moral, and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners.” (NDC, p. 254) Given its location in the ministry of the word, parishes should have a catechetical plan that integrates the entire catechetical program meeting the specific needs of its members. The entire parish staff, including the catechetical leader of the school, has a role in achieving the goals of the catechetical plan and orchestrates the catechetical process and resources. The pastor takes the leadership role in choosing skilled and effective ministers of the word. (NDC, p. 256)

In Catholic schools, no matter the subject, teachers have the opportunity to catechize by infusing the message of the Gospel throughout all aspects of the educational process. Whether teaching the sciences, history, art, physical education: each subject area provides a venue for opening the eyes of faith. Catholic teachers have a unique role as catechists because they have the privilege of working with students throughout the week and over many years of education. They have the opportunity to “teach as Jesus did” in a setting that creates the learning community within the context of faith. (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, 1972, USCCB)

The USCCB further states the following about catechesis in the Catholic schools.

“The Catholic school affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with its daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the Gospel message; for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church; for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence, and love of the Liturgy; for building community; for prayer; for proper formation of conscience; for development of virtue; and for participating in Christian service. In addition, Catholic schools strive to relate all the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life – science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth. For these reasons, whenever possible, parents should send their children to a Catholic school.” (NDC, p. 233)

In addition to the guidelines set forth in the NDC for catechesis, the 9 – 12 component closely adheres to the bishops’ guidelines for the development of catechetical tools for young people. The framework presented by the USCCB suggests that the elements be used as “building blocks” for a four-year, eight-semester program of catechetical instruction for Catholic high schools and more complete catechetical process for high school age students in the parishes. The building blocks are incorporated in this curriculum within the framework of the ten goals of the Archdiocese of Chicago. (USCCB, *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*, 2008, Washington, D.C.)

“Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church’s life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her inner growth and correspondence with God’s plan depend essentially on catechesis.” (CCC # 7)

To be an effective instructor in parish catechetical programs or Catholic schools, the following tasks of catechesis are essential catechetical instruction.

- ❖ Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith.
- ❖ Catechesis promotes a knowledge and meaning of the Liturgy and the sacraments.

- ❖ Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ.
- ❖ Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.
- ❖ Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

The six tasks of catechesis “constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.” (NDC, pp. 61-63)

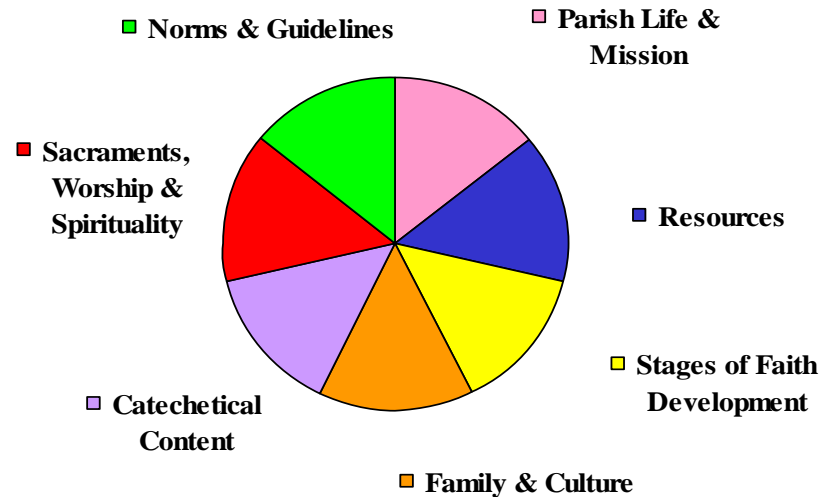
In the schools and parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago, we have witnessed effective catechesis happening in classrooms and homes. With the introduction of the Religion Curriculum the ardent hope is that by using a more unified and organic approach greater consistency of teaching and learning will occur. The Religion Curriculum contains in its goals, learning outcomes, assessments and connections all the elements of catechesis and its tasks. The catechetical ministry is the way the Church will flourish and grow into the future. We cannot underestimate the power of presenting the Christian message to our students.

## **COMPONENTS OF SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO CATECHESIS**

The catechetical framework of the Archdiocese of Chicago calls for a holistic systematic approach to catechesis in all areas of the program. By a systematic approach we mean that each element of catechesis is developed in a sequential and

coordinated manner based on the developmental stages of the learner. Described below are the elements present in the Religion Curriculum.

### *Archdiocese of Chicago Framework for Systematic Catechesis*



The framework includes the seven elements that are described below.

- ❖ Catechetical Content – outlines the goals, learning outcomes, sample assessments and connections for each grade level, PK-12
- ❖ Sacraments, Worship and Spirituality – describes worship and the sacramental life of the church, forms of prayer and expressions of Christian spirituality
- ❖ Parish Life and Mission – describes the Catholic life as lived in the parish, its liturgies and rituals, its community life, its service and mission to the world
- ❖ Family and Culture – describes how the Catholic family lives the Christian life as “domestic church,” the significance of culture in teaching the faith, and parish life in support of family life and culture
- ❖ Stages of Faith Development – describes the stages of human and faith development of the person
- ❖ Norms and Guidelines – articulates the norms and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Chicago for sacramental preparation
- ❖ Resources – lists resources to support the catechetical plan for catechesis

Included in the Religion Curriculum are the seven elements of the framework. These are evident in the next major sections of the manual. Each of these components is designed to support the catechetical enterprise.

Not only are these components designed to assist those who teach the faith to children who must come to maturity in the faith, they are also meant to educate anyone seeking to learn the faith of the Catholic Church. The Religion Curriculum is meant to be a tool of evangelization: announcing the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting all to come to a mature faith.

As Pope John Paul II stated:

...within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus ... endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know this “mystery,” the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for any one who wishes to follow him. (CT # 20)

Thus the components of a holistic systematic approach create a full plan for teaching the mysteries of the faith. It is intended to be a complete support to all who have the responsibility of carrying out the ministry of the word as catechists.

## **RELIGION CURRICULUM GOALS**

1. **Creed:** Understand, believe and proclaim the Triune God as revealed in the signs of creation, Sacred Scripture, Catholic Tradition and human experience. (NDC pp. 45-46, 75-78, 83-86, 91-93, 97-98)
2. **Sacraments:** Understand and participate in the sacraments of the Church as efficacious signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church. (GDC 85, NDC pp. 87, 113-114, 120-145, 151-152)
3. **Christian Living:** Understand and live the moral teachings of the Church through a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ expressed in love for God, conversion, the dignity of the human person, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, and love of neighbor. (NDC pp. 85-86, 97-99, 104-105, 159-169, 170-184)
4. **Sacred Scripture:** Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God's revelation through the signs of scripture. (NDC pp. 53-54, 59, 70-80, 199-200)
5. **Liturgy:** Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the Church Year and epitomized in the Eucharist the source and summit of Christian life. (NDC pp. 109-111, 145-151)
6. **Christian Prayer and Spirituality:** Understand and express the different forms of prayer consciously recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of self-surrender to God. (NDC pp. 60-61, 111-113 151-156)
7. **Catholic Church:** Understand and appreciate the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, the community of believers, as expressed in the Church's origin, mission of evangelization, hierarchical structure, marks, charisms, members and the communion of saints. (NDC pp. 93-94, 109, 124-125, 131-132, 186, 214)
8. **Parish Life:** Understand and participate in the life of the Church as lived in the parish through its community, cultural aspects, worship, sacramental life, service, missionary endeavors and organization. (NDC pp. 64-66, 82-83, 100, 104-105, 152-154, GDC #'s 222, 224, 226, 253, 254)
9. **Vocation:** Understand and undertake discipleship in Christ responding in faith by participating in the mission of the Church through living a specific call in the life of the Church. (NDC pp. 100-101, 104, GDC # 27, 56, 228, 229, 230, 255, 261)
10. **Ecumenism and Dialogue:** Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with Christian churches, Jews, Muslims and all faith traditions. (NDC pp. 210, 211-216)

The goals of the Religion Curriculum form the foundation of the curriculum, shaping its direction. As with other types of standards and goals, they are learned and integrated over time. The Religion Curriculum goals set a standard that invites and challenges the learner to understand the meaning of discipleship and respond to the call of discipleship through full participation in the life of the Church. “The sacred duty and the joy of each succeeding generation of Christian believers has been to hand on the deposit of faith that was first entrusted to the apostles by Christ himself. We have received this gift, the deposit of faith – we have not conceived it. It is the heritage of the whole Church. It is our privilege and our responsibility to preserve the memory of Christ’s words and the words themselves and to teach future generations of believers to carry out all that Christ commanded his apostles.” (NDC p. 87)

### **EXPECTATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CATECHESIS**

#### **All students will:**

- ❖ Exhibit their willingness to learn through active participation in the learning environment.
- ❖ Collaborate with teachers and peers.
- ❖ Show evidence of literacy and proficiency in the catechetical message and its application to daily life.
- ❖ Come to know how Jesus Christ is central to their lives.
- ❖ Show earnestness in preparation for active participation in the life of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ Show evidence of moral decision-making and critical thinking.
- ❖ Demonstrate understanding and application of Catholic social teaching to current societal situations.
- ❖ Articulate Christian virtues as applied to personal decision-making and behaviors.
- ❖ Show understanding that they are loved by God, are created for union with God, and are of inestimable value before the Creator.

- ❖ Exhibit spiritual growth through prayer, sacramental participation, maturing understanding of Christian discipleship and stewardship.
- ❖ Respect and appreciate the cultural and religious heritage of all people no matter the race, ethnicity or religious identity of the person.
- ❖ Exhibit understanding of their relationship with the Triune God and their ultimate destiny with their Creator.

#### **All catechists and teachers will:**

- ❖ Meet the diverse needs of students through differentiated instruction approaching the catechetical message with strategies that will help students to learn.
- ❖ Utilize a variety of teaching resources and assessments in order to help the student learn optimally.
- ❖ Use technology and other appropriate instruments that enhance the learning process.

- ❖ Provide for varied learning situations that include various grouping methods, peer leadership, and cross-curricular methods to integrate the learning process.
- ❖ Be fully informed of the catechetical content.
- ❖ Inform and involve parents in the catechesis of their children and youth through understanding of the curriculum, assessment and reporting.
- ❖ Participate in ongoing professional development.
- ❖ Pursue initial and ongoing certification as catechists in the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- ❖ Participate fully in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.
- ❖ Attend to their own spiritual lives through reflection, prayer and reading of scriptures.

**Parents and/or guardians will:**

- ❖ Witness and teach the faith to their children as primary educators.
- ❖ Maintain their homes as “domestic” churches wherein relationship with God is evident and participation in parish life is promoted.
- ❖ Esteem their children seeing in each the face of Christ.
- ❖ Witness their own relationship with God in their love for their children as the outcome of God’s love.
- ❖ Be actively involved in the life of the Church through participation in Sunday liturgies, the sacramental life of the Church, the community life of the parish and stewardship.
- ❖ Help their children to respond to the vocation God calls them to in the life of the Church and society.

- ❖ Be socially aware promoting the dignity of human life and nonviolence in the home and in the culture.
- ❖ Educate their children in the sanctity of human life and sexuality.
- ❖ Collaborate with catechists and teachers by promoting and assessing the development of faith in their children.
- ❖ Prepare their children for their participation in the sacraments.
- ❖ Attend to their own spiritual lives through reflection, prayer and reading of scriptures.

**Pastors will:**

- ❖ Develop and implement a total parish plan for catechesis encompassing the catechetical needs of adults, youth and children.
- ❖ Ensure that suitable time is given to catechesis in parish and school programs for adults, youth and children.
- ❖ Assure that catechetical formation is available for all language groups and members with special needs.
- ❖ Provide for a vital catechumenate that serves as an organizing component for the organization of catechesis in the parish.
- ❖ Oversee the implementation of the Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- ❖ Collaborate with the archdiocese in the certification requirements for catechetical leaders, youth ministers and catechists including Catholic school principals and teachers.
- ❖ Support parents in the faith education of their children especially through good liturgies, meaningful homilies, pastoral counseling, guidance and prayer.

- ❖ Engage families in preparing children for sacramental participation.
- ❖ Witness his own faith through personal spiritual development, skill as a liturgical presider, integrity of life and participation in the Church’s mission to the world.
- ❖ Employ qualified and skilled catechetical leaders who can directly implement effective programs.

**The Archbishop, auxiliary Bishops and archdiocesan agencies will:**

- ❖ Utilize resources at the central level to accomplish responsibilities for the total catechetical mission of the local church.
- ❖ Collaborate with pastors in establishing effective catechetical ministry at all levels.

- ❖ Provide for the professional development of catechetical leaders, catechists, teachers and youth ministers.
- ❖ Develop and administer certification guidelines and programs that promote effective catechetical leadership in parishes and schools.
- ❖ Research resources to assist teachers and catechists in effectively teaching the Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- ❖ Assist catechetical leaders, teachers, catechists and youth ministers in developing a deepening spirituality that strengthens their commitment to their vocation as ministers of the word.

**THE DESIGN OF THE RELIGION CURRICULUM**

In order for the Religion Curriculum to be implemented well it needs to be viewed as a “learning centered” curriculum: the design is focused totally on the student learning process and outcome. Teachers/catechists plan their instruction around how to effectively help the student to understand and internalize the message. They do this by asking and answering three questions in the order given below.

1. **What is the intended learning?**  
(**Outcome/objective:** What should students know, understand and be able to do, stated as observable behavior? Use an action verb.)

2. **What will be the evidence that students can do it?**  
(**Assessment:** What will students do to show me that they acquired and can use the knowledge, skill and understand the outcome.)
3. **What will I do to help the student be ready to show me the evidence of their learning?**  
(**Strategies:** What teaching and learning activities, resources, field trips, etc. will help me teach the knowledge, skills, and understanding in the outcome so that the student will be able to give the evidence of learning asked for in the assessments I have designed?)

The Religion Curriculum provides the *starting and ending* answers for questions 1 and 2. Teachers and catechists will develop intermediate mastery objectives matching assessments

as they teach specific knowledge and skills through the year. The Goals and Learning Outcomes will help teachers and catechists to develop the intermediate objectives.

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## **Goals**

As outlined above, the **Goals** form the foundation of the Religion Curriculum. Because of their significance, the goals are repeated for every grade level with Learning Outcomes developed for each goal. The Learning Outcomes directly support learning aspects of the goal at developmentally

appropriate times. As with any standard or goal in a curriculum, the developmental level of the student determines how deeply a goal can be understood or interpreted in light of the Learning Outcomes.

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## **Learning Outcomes**

**Learning Outcomes** state what a student needs to be able to do or to understand. The outcomes are the measurable indicators identified for each of the goals. In the Religion Curriculum the Learning Outcomes describe the basic content for each grade level providing the major reference for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The blue highlighted terms

in the outcomes are linked to the Glossary in which the references for the *Catechism* are listed. The CCC references are essential for the teacher/catechist to know for effective student achievement of the Learning Outcome.

## **Sample Assessments**

The **Sample Assessments** in the Religion Curriculum offer suggestions and cues about what the student can demonstrate to indicate mastery of the Learning Outcome. This often also provides some useful and appropriate strategies for question three above. They are not meant to be lesson plans, but rather a variety of touchstones for helping the teacher/catechist to ascertain that the student is achieving mastery of the outcome. The Sample Assessments are written in first person, as the

learner is the one who will demonstrate mastery of the outcome. Whatever the assessments used, they must accomplish the task of diagnosing the level of mastery a student has of a Learning Outcome. Teachers and catechists must attend to each student's particular way of achieving successful learning. The Sample Assessments in the Religion Curriculum also incorporate prayer forms and practices as a way of assessing the learning of an outcome. These activities

help the student to see that learning is not only an intellectual exercise but also a deepening of relationship with God: attending to the action of the Spirit within. Using reflections, prayer forms, journals, rituals and other like experiences help

the teacher assess how a student understands and applies a Learning Outcome that focuses on the relational aspects of the religious experience.

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## **Connections**

The **Connections** are resources that enhance learning of a specific Learning Outcome. The Connections are addressed to the teacher, catechist, parents, or other adults accompanying the student in the learning experience. They are support the Learning Outcome as reinforcement and application to other areas of life. There are a number of connections in the Religion Curriculum that extend to other areas of academic discipline.

There are also some specific connections that connect with other areas that enhance the relational, communal and liturgical aspects of catechesis. They are the following.

1. Family Life – provides activities that families can use in helping the student to reinforce learning a particular Learning Outcome in the home. The Family Life Connection also poses questions about family life that help the student see the how family supports his/her faith life.
2. Music – provides support for learning a particular outcome through music. Many of the choices are taken from familiar hymns used in liturgies. In any event they are cues to help the teacher/catechist use music to help the student learn through a very

significant modality in the learning process. If a particular song is not meaningful for the student's experience, another hymn should be chosen. Cultural differences should also be taken into consideration when choosing hymns.

3. Art, drama, literature, physical movement connections also incorporate activities to deepen the affective domains in relationship to a particular Learning Outcome.
4. Parish Life – provides the setting for learning a particular outcome. Connections identified under this topic are key to helping the student to understand that faith is learned in the context of a believing community. These connections are not so much associated with “intelligence” as much as with “experience” of the learning outcome.
5. Liturgy – provides activities that connect the Learning Outcome to liturgy and the liturgical calendar living out the seasons of the Church Year. These Connections provide opportunities for teachers/catechists to use prayer, liturgical actions,

- symbols and rituals to reinforce the message of the Learning Outcome.
6. Mission – provides specific activities that directly relate the broader mission of the Church to a particular Learning Outcome. These activities deepen the understanding of discipleship as not only a matter of believing but of acting based on what we believe. The Mission Connections in the upper grades have students associate Catholic social teaching with the particular mission activity.
  7. Biography – identifies saints and holy people who by their lives tell the student something about the

- Learning Outcome. The Connection requires the student to more deeply study the life of a particular saint and assess how this person's life helps the student to deepen his/her life of discipleship.
8. Scripture – provides ways of associating Sacred Scripture with a particular Learning Outcome. These Connections provide opportunities to take scripture in hand to reinforce a Learning Outcome by helping the student to seek familiarity with scripture as a primary point of reference in the Christian life.

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## The Glossary

The catechetical framework as developed in the Religion Curriculum provides a systematic approach to catechesis that incorporates multiple mechanisms to make learning the objectives easier. One particular way is the use of terms in the Learning Outcome column. There is an immediate link with the term and its meaning. Teachers/catechists, parents, and older students can have direct access to the Glossary when teaching or studying terms. Terms are highlighted only in the column for Learning Outcomes. The Glossary provides form, etymology, usage, definitions, and cross-references. The chief cross-references are the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and scripture. The terms in the Learning Outcomes provide the major reference of the CCC for the teacher/catechist in the Religion Curriculum. In other words, the blue highlighted terms in any grade are seminal to the mastery of content to be

learned at a certain grade level. The CCC references are essential for the teacher/catechist to know for effective teaching of the Learning Outcome.

It is to be noted that all of the learning outcomes are critical or important for mastery because the glossary terms used in the outcomes are basic to teaching the faith.

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The Religion Curriculum manual provides other useful tools for the teacher/catechist. The following briefly describes other tools.

1. Description of the faith development process that serve as a guide to help the teacher/catechist design age appropriate strategies and assessments
2. Description of essential components of the curriculum at each grade level
3. Prayer of the Catholic Community is designed to have available the prayers that the Catholic Church has within its treasury. Students are expected to be familiar with these prayers including liturgical prayers, devotions, the rosary, creeds, psalms and forms of prayer including meditation.
4. Curriculum Synopsis for Each Grade
5. Historical Timelines

All of the components of the manual complete the seven components of the catechetical framework. It is hoped that each of the components will help the teacher/catechist to have the common language of faith needed for effective catechesis in this local church.