

Archdiocese of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Religion Curriculum
Grades PK - 12

Office for Catechesis
Office of Catholic Schools

DRAFT

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General Glossary

With the Apostle Peter, we begin the words of this catechetical model designed for the people of faith 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 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 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 curriculum framework 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 at all age levels. Particularly, the plan called for guidelines and a curriculum for children and youth. With a more systematic approach Catholic families and parishes could be assured that no matter where the student would be located similar or the same material would be taught at the same age levels. Students who move from school to school or parish to parish can also be assured that there would be fewer “gaps” in the catechetical process.

The managers of the strategic plan for catechesis also agreed that the entire curriculum framework and the accompanying resources be placed on the archdiocesan web so that all Catholics would have access to the curriculum. Parents will be able to track what their children learn in the catechetical program. Anyone using the materials will have access to all the components of the program that have been developed by various writers. In this manner parents who are the first witnesses to the faith will be able to more directly support faith development and actively engage in teaching their children.

DEFINITION OF CATECHESIS

Catechesis is a life-long and ongoing process in which people are invited and supported to be in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ and with each other (*GDC 380. 81:CT 5*) Catechesis, therefore, has the aim 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 life-

long 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 takes many forms and includes the initiation of adults, youth and children as well as the intentional and systematic effort to enable all to grow in faith and discipleship. (*Decisions for the Future of Our Church*, Archdiocese of Chicago, 2000)

CATECHECTICAL 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: family, 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 companionship 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 one's life in Christ. The following are catechetical elements that provide process for parish catechetical programs.

- ❖ Scriptural – sharing 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

Underpinning the catechetical elements are theological elements that give shape to the content taught in the curriculum. All basal catechetical series currently used in catechetical and school programs must have these elements. They are included in the framework.

- ❖ 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)

The name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God...and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ. (GDC)

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.

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)

“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 # 6)

To be an effective instructor in parish catechetical programs or Catholic schools, below are listed some useful suggestions in preparing to teach.

- ❖ Stress over and over again...the faith is the most important thing you will ever teach. It is the only thing in life that lasts.
- ❖ Love your students, even the ones who are the most challenging. Theirs is the face of Christ.
- ❖ Meaning in life is the essence of lessons...more so than facts and figures. Students must connect faith and life for it to have meaning.
- ❖ Student/teacher interaction is more important than “seatwork.” Active engagement is the key to learning.
- ❖ Stress the importance of daily prayer and weekly attendance at Sunday liturgy.
- ❖ Spend time preparing the lessons.
- ❖ Avoid overkill on resources. A few consistent sources will be sufficient.

- ❖ Look for professional development opportunities by participating in the catechetical certification process of the Archdiocese.
- ❖ A catechist needs to believe in the value and interest of what she/he is teaching just like a doctor must believe in health. Teaching will only be as effective as your own faith is lived.
- ❖ Catechists proclaim the Good News and it needs to be proclaimed with enthusiasm and great joy. (*1 Peter 1:9*)

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 archdiocesan curriculum the ardent hope is that by using a more unified and organic approach greater consistency will occur. The catechetical ministry is the way our Church will flourish and grow into the future and for the sake of the world. We cannot underestimate the power of the presentation of the Christian message in the lives of our children.

The following criteria for authentic presentation is identified in the *National Directory for Catechesis*.

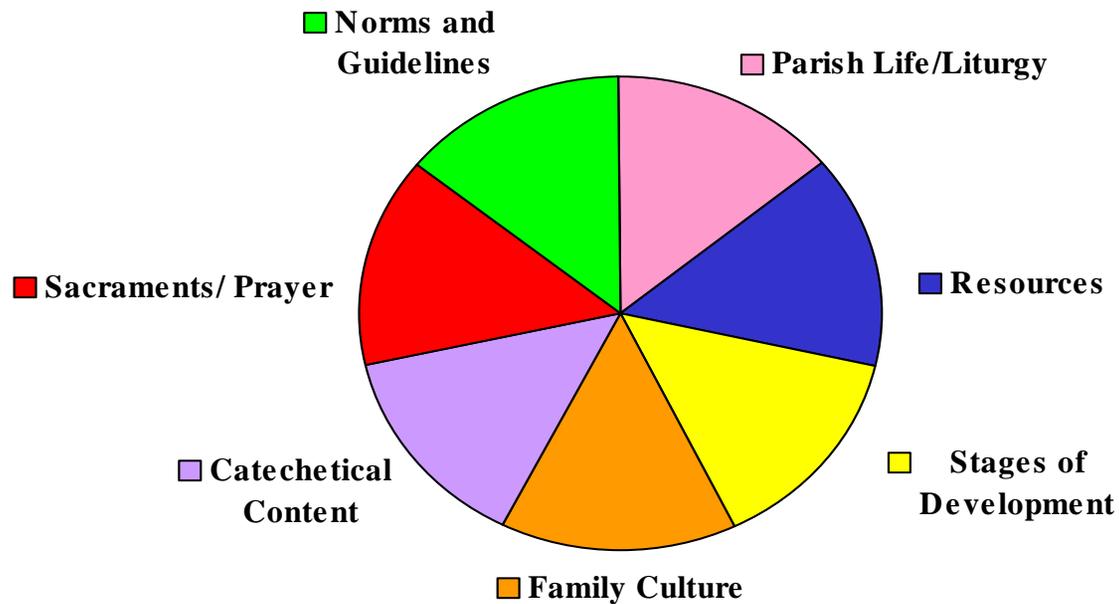
- ❖ Centers on Christ
- ❖ Introduces the Trinitarian dimension of the Gospel message
- ❖ Proclaims the Good News of salvation and liberation
- ❖ Comes from and leads to the Church
- ❖ Has a historical character
- ❖ Seeks inculturation and preserves the integrity and purity of the message
- ❖ Offers the comprehensive message of the Gospel and respects its inherent hierarchy of truths
- ❖ Communicates the profound dignity of the human person
- ❖ Fosters a common language of faith (*NDC p. 75*)

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 learners. (NCD #229)

Archdiocese of Chicago Systematic Catechesis for Children



For the Archdiocese of Chicago, there are seven components used in the systematic approach. The components are:

- ❖ Catechetical Content – curriculum that describes the goals, learning outcomes, assessments and connections for each grade level, PK-12
- ❖ Sacraments, Prayer and Spirituality – describes sacramental life of the church, forms of prayer in the Catholic Church and Christian Spirituality
- ❖ Parish Life, Liturgy and Service – 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 Human 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 available in the archdiocese to support the catechetical plan for catechesis, teaching resources, courses, catechetical certification process

Each of these components is designed to support the catechetical enterprise. A catechist, teacher or parent can use some aspect of the components to assist in teaching the catechetical message designed in the section on Catechetical Content. The components support the theological and

catechetical elements described above. In order to accommodate the many challenges of effective catechesis for our time, the components contain contacts to help the work of catechesis at the parish level. For example, a teacher would be able to contact the Office of Divine Worship for assistance in some aspect of teaching the liturgy. Or, a catechist might contact the Jegen Center to get resources on a particular area of content being taught in the classroom. A parent may wish to sign up for a class on scripture sponsored by the Office for Catechesis in order to help other family members understand this aspect of the catechetical message.

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. It 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 states:

...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 ... 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 to children. It is not intended to be complex in its use but rather a complete support to all who have the responsibility of carrying out the ministry of the word as catechists. It demands a certain rigor to be complete in teaching the message, faithful to the truth of the faith and systematic based on the developmental aspects of maturation.

This framework incorporates the use of the published basal catechetical series approved by the USCCB and the Archdiocese of Chicago. While each series provides material

appropriate to the developmental level of students and the requirements of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, they vary in their approach to the content and methodologies. The framework of the archdiocese systematizes the content based on the needs of this local church. Catechists and teachers who use the framework will notice similarities to the series adopted by the parishes. They will also notice differences. The differences are described in the Catechetical Content section. It is expected that catechists and teachers have at their disposal current approved basal catechisms and the supports of the framework.

Catechetical Content

RELIGION CURRICULUM GOALS

While there are seven components to the systematic approach, the Catechetical Content is the essential expression of the catechetical message. The content is described for each grade level based on goals, learning outcomes, sample assessments and connection to other disciplines.

The curriculum builds on ten major goals, or standards, articulated for the entire program. Each goal has specific learning outcomes to be met at each grade level. The learning outcomes build on one another from grade to grade so that the spiraling growth of content and engagement develops long lasting impact over time. All of the elements of theology and catechesis are incorporated into the framework through these

ten goals. The goals are lifelong objectives in the journey of the Christian disciple.

The content of faith is the heritage of the whole Church. It is the privilege and responsibility of the entire people of God to preserve the memory of Christ's words and actions and to hand on the content of this faith to future generations.

(National Directory for Catechesis p. 69)

The following are the ten goals of the curriculum.

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. 45-6, 75-8, 83-86, 91-3, 97-8)
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, 113-4, 120-45, 151-2)
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, 97-9, 104-5, 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, 111-113 151-6)
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. 93-4, 109, 124-5, 131-2, 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. 64-6, 82-3,100, 104-5, 152-4, *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. 100-1, 104, *GDC* #'s 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, Moslems and all faith traditions. (*NDC* pp. 210, 211-16)

The goals are accompanied by a glossary of terms.

The terms are highlighted in the learning outcomes so that catechists will be able to teach the terms within the context of the outcomes. Definitions are provided so that there is consistency of understanding the meaning of the terms. Having a glossary as part of the curriculum will provide the possibility of greater continuity from parish to parish and school to school.

There are some aspects of the catechetical content that differ from the published basal series. The differences are highlighted below.

1. While doctrine is taught developmentally, there are some concepts that will be taught in one grade rather than another. This is typical of all published series. Some content will appear at different times from one grade to another in the archdiocesan framework and may be at variance with a particular basal textbook.
2. There is one general glossary of terms and definitions that will be used for the Archdiocese. This will allow for a more seamless approach to supporting what is learned about doctrine and less of a “gap” in doctrinal understandings between and among parishes and schools.
3. In the archdiocesan curriculum scripture is treated more systematically than topically throughout the framework. It will assure that students will be exposed to scripture in a more rigorous manner with the intention that students will have studied the four gospels in their entirety as well as the Acts of the Apostles by end of twelfth grade. There will be systematic exposure to salvation history as developed in the Old Testament

(Hebrew Scriptures) along with the study of the New Testament (Christian Scriptures) throughout the elementary and high school grades.

4. Sacramental preparation is based on the guidelines of the archdiocese with the use of currently approved textbooks.
5. Liturgy and sacramental participation are central to the catechetical ministry. It is imperative that students learn by active participation and doing ritual, liturgy, and forms of prayer. Pastors, D.R.E.’s, principals, and pastoral ministers are key to making these experiences meaningful for life. These experiences cannot be created by a textbook or curriculum but by the creative and resourceful leaders in the parishes.
6. While published catechetical materials are more universal in their approach to race and culture, the archdiocesan framework attends to the cultural diversity within its geographical boundaries. The component on *Family and Culture* describes the major cultures of the archdiocese, Catholic families within those cultures and parishes serving them. All components of the framework are translated into the major languages of the archdiocese.

7. All published catechetical materials provide multiple methodologies and teaching strategies to make the curriculum meaningful for the students. Teachers will engage students in creative activities designed to help students remember, reflect and integrate what they are learning. The Sample Assessments provide ways to help the student arrive at meaning and integration. The Connections provide cross-disciplinary integration so that teachers have ideas about infusing the religion curriculum into the entire learning program.
8. In the section on the Catholic Church, the catechetical content has students study the history of their parish and of the archdiocese. They also study the lives of saints, holy people and leaders including those who influenced the mission of this local church. Published catechetical materials have a more universal approach to teaching the lives of the saints.
9. Assessment in the archdiocesan religion curriculum will be based on mastery and meaningful integration. Parents would know what mastery is expected so that they can support those aspects of the goals and objectives. The Archdiocese will provide an assessment instrument in the future to help parents, catechists and teachers assess how students are learning.

These differences are those of approach (use of backwards design), organization of content and some additional content. The religion curriculum does not replace the basal catechetical series currently in a school or catechetical program. The hope is that one enhances the other. All

parishes and schools, while incorporating the religion curriculum of the Archdiocese into the religious education program, are expected to use an approved basal catechetical series.

The catechetical content steps up expectations for teaching and learning. The Church asks us to be “rigorous” in the catechetical ministry treating religious instruction as a discipline to be seriously taught. At the same time, the learning outcomes outline the basics of catechesis that are developmentally appropriate for every age level.

Most students when they graduate from eighth grade will have little or no systematic catechesis available to them as high school students. While a little over half of Catholic elementary age students attend a religious education program or Catholic school, fewer than 30% of high school students participate in parish religious education or attend a Catholic high school. How do we effectively help students learn who Jesus is in their lives and how they will be informed and committed believers in adulthood?

We are challenged to provide effective systematic catechesis during the “teachable moments” when students are in our parish and school programs. The religion curriculum attempts to invigorate the opportunities to have an organized content, a common language and supportive assessment.

EXPECTATIONS

In accordance with good teaching and learning practice, it is essential that ministers of the word use a systematic approach to teaching the faith as revealed in scripture and in Catholic doctrine.

This catechesis is didactic in character, but is directed toward the giving of witness in the faith. It is an initial catechesis but not a fragmentary one, since it will have to reveal, although in an elementary way, all the principal mysteries of faith and their effects on the child's moral and religious life.

(CT # 37)

In using the curriculum, **catechists and teachers** must meet the diverse needs of students through differentiated instruction approaching the catechetical message with strategies that will help students to learn.

- ❖ They must become informed of the catechetical content, skilled in appropriate teaching techniques and willing to participate in ongoing professional development.
- ❖ Parish and school religion directors and coordinators must allow for teachers and catechists to be certified as catechists and maintain ongoing certification requirements.
- ❖ Teachers and catechists must attend to their own growth in spirituality as participating Catholics who witness to their life in Christ. As catechists they are not only

skilled teachers but also effective witnesses of the faith. This can only happen through living the Christian life with integrity and prayer.

Students who are exposed to the curriculum will exhibit their willingness to learn through active participation in the learning environment, collaboration with teachers and students, and earnestness in preparation for full participation in the life of the Church.

- ❖ They will understand that they are loved by God, are created for union with God, and are of inestimable value before the Creator.
- ❖ They will come to know who Jesus is in their lives especially in studying the scriptures and in a life of prayer and service to others.
- ❖ They will be able to use learning tools available in the study of religion and be able to connect what they learn to everyday life especially in family life.
- ❖ They will apply the social teachings of the Church in their understanding of self, their relationships with others and the environment.
- ❖ They will understand the meaning and value of Christian stewardship in a multicultural Church and world.
- ❖ They will have an understanding of their relationship with the Triune God and their ultimate destiny with their Creator.

Parents and/or guardians will be involved as best they can in the witnessing and teaching of the faith to their children. This happens most effectively in maintaining a home as the “domestic church” where relationship with God is esteemed and relationship with the Church is promoted.

- ❖ They will show esteem for their children, seeing in each child the face of Christ.
- ❖ They will witness their own relationship with God the Creator in their own love for their children as esteemed works of God’s creative love.
- ❖ They will 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.
- ❖ They will help their children to respond to the vocation God calls them to in the life of the Church and society.
- ❖ They will be socially aware and promote the dignity of human life and nonviolence in the home and in the culture.
- ❖ They will teach the faith by supporting what children learn in the parish catechetical programs or the Catholic school.
- ❖ They will collaborate with catechists and teachers by promoting and assessing the development of faith in their children.

Pastors will take their leadership role as chief minister of the word in parish life by implementing the archdiocesan

religion curriculum framework in all catechetical programs for children.

- ❖ He will collaborate with the archdiocese in the certification requirements for catechetical leaders and catechists including Catholic school principals and teachers.
- ❖ He will support parents in the faith education of their children especially through good liturgies, meaningful homilies, pastoral counseling, guidance and prayer.
- ❖ He will assist families in preparing children for sacramental participation in the Church.
- ❖ He will witness his own faith through personal spiritual development, skill as a liturgical presider, integrity of life and participation in mission of the Church to the world.
- ❖ He will employ qualified and skilled catechetical leaders who can directly implement effective programs.

Archdiocesan agencies will provide for the professional development of catechetical leaders, catechists and teachers so that the catechetical curriculum framework will be effectively implemented in the parishes and schools.

- ❖ They will develop and administer certification requirements for catechetical leaders (directors and coordinators of religious education and principals of Catholic elementary and high schools) and for catechists in parish programs and schools.
- ❖ They will research resources for the framework and for the catechetical ministry of the archdiocese.

- ❖ They will provide for courses and other ways to assist catechists in developing their lives as Catholics with consciously deepening spirituality, involvement in the Church and its mission of evangelization to the world.

The ministry of the word has never been “small work” for the Church. Being a catechist or a teacher is a great responsibility but one that is filled with many rewards. Every student has

THE CATECHETICAL CURRICULUM GRADES PK- 12

Below is the Catechetical Curriculum outlined by grade: Goals, Learning Outcomes, Sample Assessments and Connections.

The framework provides a template for the basic objectives to be achieved for each goal. The Learning Outcomes are all identified as critical or important for mastery. Mastery can be determined through any number of assessments. The Sample Assessments are examples of how a student indicates knowledge or mastery of an outcome. Other assessments can be used by the catechist if what is listed does not fit the individual needs of students.

The questions used in the Sample Assessments and Connections are meant to help students understand and analyze the material. By using the questions teachers and catechists can get a good sense of how well the student is thinking and reflecting about the material.

unlimited capacity to learn about God’s Spirit at work in their lives. Catechists and teachers must have at their disposal the best tools of the Archdiocese and parishes to be effective in their ministry. The Spirit uses every word, every kindness, every challenge and suffering to enlighten and evoke deeper response in faith. The catechetical curriculum framework is designed to support that work of love.

The section on scripture is developed in such a way that catechists and students read scripture to understand the basic movements of salvation history. From fifth to twelfth grades, students are exposed to entire gospels or sections of the Old or New Testaments. Without exposure to the scripture there is no way a student can grasp the immense beauty and mystery of God’s love for humankind through the course of the years. In reading scripture, however, there is an effort to get immediate feedback for internalization and understanding through use of questions and connections. If a catechist or teacher uses those aids in reading scripture with the students, they will be able to get at a deeper understanding and appreciation for the meanings to be conveyed. Scripture should be proclaimed with the dynamism of a good storyteller. It does not take a lot of scriptural study to do the work. It does take preparation and a willingness to go deeper into God’s word for the sake of better learning. For the fifth, sixth and seventh grades particularly, it is recommended that the synoptic gospels be studied during the

season of Lent when these scriptures can come alive with the season of preparation for the great celebration of the Paschal Mystery. The Gospel of John is treated throughout the grades and completely in high school.

The catechetical framework 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. Terms are highlighted in blue on the web site and highlighted terms are hyperlinked into the General Glossary. There is an immediate link with the term and its meaning. Teachers, parents, even older students can have direct access to the General Glossary when teaching or studying terms. Terms are highlighted only in the column for Learning Outcomes. In this way it is easy to see what is expected in mastering the learning outcome.

There is in the Connections section of the curriculum a cross referencing with other goals in the framework. At each grade level, while the goals are distinct, they are also related to each

other in how doctrine is conveyed. The teacher or catechist needs to see how these connections are important in effectively conveying a cohesive message. Cross-references are identified by parentheses.

It is to be noted that all of the learning outcomes are critical or important for mastery because the terms used in the outcomes are basic to teaching the faith. A teacher or catechist might add to the material in terms of items that may be considered important to learn or useful to learn. Assessment for learning these added outcomes would be created by the teacher.

If the materials are used in paper form, the framework is a complete document. However, as was mentioned previously, the curriculum is accompanied by the basal catechetical series used in the school or catechetical program. The framework, while very complete, does not eliminate the use of other catechetical materials. One supports the other in conveying the riches of the faith.