



Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization Parents' Guide to Grade 8 - Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide

The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect....It is deepened all the more when parents comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it. (GDC, no. 226 and CT, no. 68)

What exactly is this guide *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization*?

- A document that clearly states what participants in Catholic faith community religious education programs must *know, understand, and do* at each grade level

What is the aim of this guide?

- The primary aim of this guide is to support integrated planning and preparations across all sectors of the church, including Catholic faith communities and families. This will be done as a part of a diocesan-wide effort to strengthen the teaching of the faith for adults, youth, and children. It is directed toward the need to prepare the whole church (not just children) to overcome the current epidemic of ignorance and doubt about the faith.
- These guidelines focus on the need for mutual collaboration, communication and consultation. They strive to clarify the rolls, responsibilities and mutual accountabilities needed by priests, lay catechetical leaders and all who assist in efforts to put adults, youth and children into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ through life-long catechesis in and through the Catholic Church. These guidelines are focused to help all of Catholic faith communities as they both revise and plan their future catechetical efforts. Although this guide focuses on the formation of children, these standards will also provide a framework for future efforts in the faith formation of youth and young adults.

How is it organized?

- *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* is organized around the **Six Key Elements** of a lived Catholic faith while always remembering that the context for catechesis is *evangelization*. The six key elements of a Catholic faith life are: Knowledge of the faith; Liturgical and Sacraments; Morality; Prayer; Education for Living in the Christian Community; Evangelization and Apostolic Life. These are also known as the six tasks of Catechesis.

For Each Element

- There are standards or broad headings. All these standards should be covered in every program for adults, youth and children.

For Each Standard

- Each standard in turn has age appropriate indicators or knowledge, skills or behavior.
- These indicators should drive instruction and guide or focus use of any text or resources.

How are the indicators formatted?

- **Core items that must be covered in all Catholic faith community programs are in bold print.**
- *Enrichment items that are optional and can be covered if there is time are in italics.*

What is meant by words being underlined?

- **Underlining** means this is a vocabulary word to know. These words and their definitions are found online as *Appendix 3: Alphabetical Glossary*. When a simpler age appropriate definition is needed it is within the indicator itself.

Full texts of the prayers and practices for Catholics to teach your child are found online as *Appendix 2: Key Practices and Prayers for Catholics*.



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Key Element I: Knowledge of the Faith

– What We Believe

“Sacred Scripture has a preeminent position in catechesis because Sacred Scripture “presents God’s own Word in unalterable form” and “makes the voice of the Holy Spirit resound again and again in the words of the prophets and apostles.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church is intended to complement Sacred Scripture. Together with Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture constitutes the supreme rule of faith.” (NDC no. 24)

At-Home Ideas:

At this age, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Knowledge of the Faith** in your home: Parents communicate their values to their children through family participation in the life, mission, and work of the parish community. Frequent reference to Jesus and the Gospels and the Church helps keep them relevant in the life of the young adolescent. 7th and 8th grade youth are ready to start learning more complex teachings of the Church and Christian living.

Standard 1 **CREED:** Understand, believe and proclaim the Triune and redeeming God as revealed in creation and human experience, in Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, and as entrusted to the teaching office of the Church.

- Show understanding that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is central to the mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life.
- Show understanding of God as transcendent.
- State how the desire for God is written in the human heart because we are created by God and for God.
- Show understanding that there is no contradiction between [faith](#) and [reason](#).
- State that God created us in a state of original holiness and justice.
- State the meaning of [original sin](#).
- Recognize that God’s permitting evil is a mystery that God helps us to understand through his Son Jesus Christ.
- State that the [Incarnation](#) is the mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ.
- State belief that Jesus died for our sins, thus opening the possibility of eternal union with God.
- State belief that Jesus’ death has the power to save all people even though they do not know Christ.
- Recognize that God gives us only one life, unique and unrepeatable, and that when we die in God’s friendship, we live forever in union with God in heaven.

Standard 2 **SACRED SCRIPTURE:** Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God’s revelation through Sacred Scripture.

- Recognize the Holy Spirit as central to opening the eyes of those who read Scripture and moving them to have faith in God.
- Name and describe the two senses of Scripture: literal and spiritual.
- Identify three categories of the spiritual sense of Scripture: [allegorical](#) (faith), [anagogical](#) (hope) and [moral](#) (love/charity).
- Show understanding that [Apostolic Tradition](#) and [Sacred Scripture](#), as entrusted to the teaching ministry of the Church (the [Magisterium](#)), make up a single deposit of the faith.
- Recognize that to discover the Scripture author’s intention, the reader must take into account the culture, history and literary forms of that time.
- Explain that the author of the Gospel of Luke also wrote the [Acts of the Apostles](#).



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- Identify the [Holy Spirit](#), received by the disciples at [Pentecost](#), as the major figure in the Acts of the Apostles, enlivening the establishment of the Church after the Ascension of Jesus.
- Recount the mission of the first witnesses in Jerusalem led by Peter. (Acts 2: 1-41)
- Recount the story of Peter's acceptance of [Gentiles](#) into baptism (Acts 11:1-18) and the first missionary journey of Paul. (Acts 13:1-15:15)
- Describe why [letters](#) are incorporated into [Sacred Scripture](#).
- Describe how the stories of the early Christian movement help us to understand the beginnings of the Church.

Key Element II: Liturgy and Sacraments

- How We Celebrate

“Faith and worship are as closely related to one another as they were in the early Church: faith gathers the community for worship, and worship renews the faith of the community... In her Liturgy, the Church celebrates what she professes and lives above all the Paschal Mystery, by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.” (NDC no. 32)

At-Home Ideas:

At this level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of the **Liturgy and Sacraments** in your home: Parents set standards for family involvement in Catholic faith community liturgical celebrations including: attending regularly, speaking positively about them, dressing with care, arriving on time and participating fully. Family encouragement for young people to take on the responsibility of liturgical ministries is essential in their decision to do so. Young adolescents learn how to fully and actively engage in the liturgy whether they are participating in a ministry or are in the pew.

Standard 3 SACRAMENTS: Understand and participate in the sacraments of the Church as effective signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.

- Recognize that the benefits of the sacramental life are personal and [ecclesial](#).
- Recognize the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as a faith-formation process in which new members are welcomed into the church.
- Recognize confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation carrying an [indelible character](#) sealing the [confirmands](#) with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- State requirements for validly receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation and the essential elements of the sacrament.
- State and describe the [gifts of the Holy Spirit](#).
- Recognize and explain why the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- State the meaning of [transubstantiation](#) in the Holy Eucharist.
- State understanding of the permanence of sacramental marriage.
- Show understanding that because Christ is at work in the sacraments, they are effective independent of the disposition or holiness of the priest.

Standard 4 LITURGY: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the liturgy year and epitomized in the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life.

- Show understanding of all parts of the Mass and the role of the assembly.
- Show understanding of public devotions in Catholic faith community life, especially Eucharistic adoration and [benediction](#)



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- Name the special signs of the bishop: the mitre, crozier, pectoral cross and ring.
- Explain that the Church professes that the Eucharist is: thanksgiving and praise to the Father; the sacrificial memorial of Christ and his Body; the representation of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection; the presence of Christ by the power of his Word and of his Spirit.

Key Element III: Morality - How We Live

“Christ is the norm of morality. Christian morality consists in following Jesus Christ, in abandoning oneself to him, in letting oneself be transformed by his grace and renewed by his mercy, gifts which come to us in the living communion of his Church.” (NDC no. 42)

At-Home Ideas:

At this level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Morality** in your home: As children approach the teen years they are confronted with serious questions about life, love and chastity. More than ever, they need to know they have a solid foundation they can lean on when pressure is pushing them in a different direction. Their faith and relationship with their parents ought to fill this need. Although parents feel like they are being listened to less and less, studies show that children are listening and often act on what they have heard from their parents (this is especially true in the area of chastity). Parents need to keep discussing Catholic values and moral decision making skills with their children so they have a compass to follow.

Standard 5 **Conscience:** Develop a moral conscience informed by church teachings.

- Reflect upon and give evidence of being made in God's image and likeness.
- Explain that the context of moral decision-making within the Catholic Christian tradition is human dignity, God's grace, the virtues and the Holy Spirit.
- Describe free will as the ability to choose the good and how this choice leads to growth and maturity.
- State and describe the implications of how conscience is a judgment that helps us see the moral quality of an action.
- Recognize and give examples of acts that are wrong regardless of how good the end or intention.
- State that God's sanctifying grace helps us to seek holiness by our free response to doing God's will in living the Christian life.
- Recognize that to receive God's mercy and forgiveness, we must admit our sins.
- Describe how we can habitually know and do what is good with the help of the Theological and Cardinal Virtues.

Standard 6 **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, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, the dignity of the human person and love of neighbor.

- Describe human freedom as a force for growth and maturity.
- Describe human sexuality as being all that makes a person male and female: physical characteristics and responses, psychological characteristics and emotional responses, social relationships and need for intimacy, intellectual aptitude and attitude, spiritual awareness, and the ability to participate in procreation.
- Describe how friendships grow through chastity.
- State marriage's twofold purpose.



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- Recognize that the Church has a right and duty to teach moral truth.
- State the meaning of **justification** as a gift from God and not merited by human endeavor.
- Recognize that the Holy Spirit guides Christians to set their hearts on the Kingdom of God rather than on material riches.
- Understand that our beliefs are sound and rooted in Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, as entrusted to the teaching office (**Magisterium**) of the Church.
- Explain, defend and give examples of how **Catholic Social Teaching** principles inform and critique both personal and societal situations.
- State that we should be aware of how media can shape our values and practices either positively or negatively.

Key Element IV: Prayer ***- How We Pray***

“God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer” (CCC no. 1075). His initiative comes first; the human response to his initiative is itself prompted by the grace of the Holy Spirit... In prayer, the Holy Spirit not only reveals the identity of the Triune God to human persons but also reveals the identity of human persons to themselves. (NDC no. 34)

At-Home Ideas:

At this level, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Prayer** in your home: Children are becoming more socially aware. Sometimes this means being hesitant to do or be seen doing spiritual activities. Talk to your children about involvement in the Church and community life and why it is important to you that they participate. Realize that their feelings are valid while still encouraging them in a positive direction. Their living a virtuous life will be tested in new and varied ways. Help them set healthy boundaries and learn ways to deal with pressures of being a teen.

Standard 7 **PRAYER:** Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer and acknowledge prayer as the primary way we deepen our knowledge of God in the community.

- Examine our relationship with God through personal prayer.
- Discuss the concept and need for openness to God's call in our lives: vocation.
- Identify how the Gospel affirms and challenges our thoughts and actions.
- Plan a Rite of Reconciliation.
- Write a spontaneous prayer.
- Compose a prayer for vocations.
- Describe a specific Catholic devotion such as a novena.
- Practice the prayer form of **Lectio Divina**.
- Examine how prayer of imagination, especially in the context of meditation, is part of the prayer life of a Christian
- Demonstrate how and why one participates in the Catholic devotion of Eucharistic adoration.

*Please note that the full texts of the prayers and practices for Catholics to teach your child are found online as Appendix 2: **KEY PRACTICES AND PRAYERS FOR CATHOLICS.***



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Key Element V: Education for Living in the Christian Community ***- How We Live in the Community, the Church***

“We were created as social beings who find fulfillment only in love – for God and for our neighbor. If we are truly to gaze upon him who is the source of our joy, we need to do so as members of the people of God (cf. Spe Salvi no. 14). If this seems counter-cultural, that is simply further evidence of the urgent need for a renewed evangelization of culture.” (Benedict XVI – 16 April 2008 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception)”

At-Home Ideas:

At this age, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Education for Living in the Christian Community** in your home: Children are becoming more socially aware. Sometimes this means being hesitant to do or be seen doing spiritual activities. Talk to your children about involvement in the Church and community life and why it is important to you that they participate. Realize that their feelings are valid while still encouraging them in a positive direction. Their living a virtuous life will be tested in new and varied ways. Help them set healthy boundaries and learn ways to deal with pressures of being a teen.

Standard 8 **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.

- Show understanding that the Church is a living institution, both human and divine, gifted by the Holy Spirit with a mission to the world throughout history.
- The Church has special charisms that she receives from the Holy Spirit to accomplish its work.
- Recognize that the members of the Church have contributed to and have undermined the mission of the Church throughout her history.
- Show understanding that the Church is a sign to the world of its salvation in Christ.
- Recognize that the Church’s gifts and growth are evident through all periods of history in the last 2,000 years.
- Explain how the Eastern Catholic Churches, as part of the Catholic Church, are faithful to the Pope and have their own unique church laws, rites and spirituality.
- Show understanding of the causes of the Reformation, the rise of Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation of the Catholic Church to begin the inner work of reform begun in the Council of Trent in the Age of Reform from 1517 to 1891 CE.
- Describe the Age of the Modern Church beginning in 1890 as a sign of hope for society undergoing vast change through the rise and fall of totalitarian governments.
- Recount the Vatican II Council as the ecumenical council leading the Catholic Church into a place of spiritual leadership in modern society, addressing particularly the universal call of all to holiness, the vocation and mission of the laity, the work of ecumenism and religious dialogue, the role of bishops in subsidiarity, and the current challenges of the Church in the era of global economics and quest for peace.

Standard 9 **ECUMENISM:** Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with other Catholic (Eastern), Orthodox, and Christian churches.

- Show that ecumenism is an evangelizing work of the Church in the task of creating unity and peace in the world.



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- Explain how the Lutheran, Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, and Apostolic churches are some of the churches evolved from the time of the Protestant Reformation, and that some are therefore called Protestant Churches.
- Defend the Pope as the leader of the Catholic Church throughout the world, the successor of the Apostle Peter and a sign of our unity.
- Develop a prayer service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25).*
- Explain that our respect for other Christians and faiths does not mean we deny the fullness of the faith Christ taught is found in the Catholic Church.
- State that our respect for other Christians means that we can both recognize what we share in common but that we also need to be honest about how we differ.
- Identify that the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches call the leader of their worldwide community a "patriarch", but only the Eastern Catholic Churches acknowledge the Pope as head of the universal Catholic Church with whom their Patriarch is in full union.
- Explain how the Eastern Catholic Church's celebration of Confirmation or "[chrismation](#)" is different from the way Roman Catholics celebrate Confirmation.

Standard 10 CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES AND RELATIONSHIPS: Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations.

- Describe how friendships grow through chastity.
- State Marriage's twofold purpose.
- State the conditions for abortion being a grave sin and the need for reconciliation and healing.
- Acknowledge that to communicate well with adults and peers involves listening, self-disclosure, and compromise.
- Understand that the virtue of temperance disposes us to avoid every kind of excess.
- Explain that Catholic Christians have specific moral values and teachings about human sexuality.

Standard 11 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.

- Recognize the Church's understanding of [vocation](#) as a call from God to engage in the [mission](#) of the Church.
- State that [catechists](#) respond to a specific call of the Church to witness and teach the Gospel.
- Understand that religious life is a special type of discipleship.

Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life

– *How we, as Individuals and Community, Live in Service to the World.*

“Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family as his sons and daughters, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God.” (Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, no. 78)

At-Home Ideas:

At this age, these are things you can do as a family to strengthen the teaching of **Evangelization and Apostolic Life** in your home: As children begin to think more deeply about their future, but sure to help discern their vocation by discussing a call to priesthood, religious life and marriage. Help



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them know if they have a calling and to awaken any desires God may have placed in their hearts. No matter their vocation, let them know that God has a plan for their lives. Families who open their hearts to those in need, and put their faith into action witness Christian service to the young adolescent child. Parents help children understand the service they experience in light of Christian teaching and the gospel.

Standard 12 CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Know critique and apply social justice and stewardship principles to societal situations in a way that acknowledges and affirms the dignity of the human person and community.

- Realize that the protection of life and the dignity of every person is rooted in Scripture (Gn 1:26-27, Dt 30:19, 1 Cor 15:2)*
- State how suicide, abortion, the taking of another's life and capital punishment are not options for human life.**
- Show understanding of stewardship as a spiritual commitment of disciples to take responsibility for the global environment and human concerns.**
- Recognize that citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are against the moral order.**
- Show understanding that legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good.*
- Explain the strict conditions for legitimate defense by military force as established by the "just war" theory.*
- Recognize that those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defense available to the weakest bear witness to evangelical charity, provided that do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies.**
- Show that Catholic social teaching recognizes three sets of human rights and responsibilities: right to life, economic rights, and political and cultural rights.**
- Show how the scriptural vision of life encompasses justice, peace, equality and stewardship.*
- Explain that we are called to transform society by implementing the Church's social teaching.**
- Describe the common good as the sum total of social conditions allowing people to reach their fulfillment.*
- Outline how the Beatitudes challenge us as disciples to continual conversion in our personal and social lives.*
- Understand that service is action rooted in and flowing from prayer.**
- Explain the need for an effective change of mentality and lifestyle in order to be good stewards of the earth.**
- Define stewardship as responsibility for all God's creation.*
- Describe stewardship in terms of using our time, talent and treasure as a response of gratitude to God.**
- Understand that Jesus' mission and ministry are continued today through the ministries of the Word, worship, community building, and service.**
- Engage in service to the community (i.e., family, Catholic faith community, local, national, and global) in response to the Gospel call.**

Standard 13 INTER-RELIGIOUS 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 Jews, Muslims, and all faith traditions.

- Describe the universality of the Church.**
- Show that dialogue is an evangelizing work of the Church in the task of creating unity and peace in the world.**



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- Explain that the Church recognizes her common heritage with the Jews, and, moved not by any political consideration but solely by the religious motivation of Christian charity, the Church deploras all hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews.
- Recognize the growth of Islam as a world religion and its contributions to culture and world peace.
- Identify the religious holy days of *Eid al Fitr*, at the end of *Ramadan*, and *Eid al-Adha*.
- Identify the life of present day Judaism as organized around the synagogue and the rabbi.
- Report how anti-Semitism began and why Catholics do not engage in any form of anti-Semitism today.

Standard 14 **MISSIONARY VOCATION:** Demonstrate an appreciation for Catholic missionary and evangelization efforts through our Catholic faith community, its culture, worship, sacramental life, and service.

- Give an example of how you would defend your faith to someone who criticizes your belief in Jesus.
- Critique the statement that “religion has no place in public life”.
- Identify Catholic faith community organizations and their role in activities which challenge us to live out our baptismal call to discipleship and service.
- Explain that the Church has special charisms that she receives from the Holy Spirit to accomplish her work.
- Examine and become involved in your Catholic faith community and wider community's pro-life activities.
- Show understanding of the leadership of Pope John Paul II in the Church and the world through the call for a new evangelization.

The most important task of the catechesis of children is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith. (NDC, no. 205)