

Implementation of the Diocesan Religion Curriculum

The information below provides an overview of the general purpose(s) of each section of the Diocesan Religion Curriculum. The Curriculum is not merely to be used as a checklist to ensure that everything has been covered during the year. The Curriculum is meant to aid the Catholic school teacher and catechist in all aspects of lesson-planning.

How is the curriculum to be used? The Diocesan Religion Curriculum provides the foundational truths that are to underlie each teaching. Please note that the curriculum is not to replace the textbook nor is it a set of lesson plans. However, the curriculum will complement the use of the religion textbook as the teaching and activities are to be based upon these foundational truths.

What is the function of the Overview and how it does it relate to the curriculum? The Overview provides the framework for the entire curriculum. It is a concise presentation of the Catholic Faith and points to our goal in handing on the Faith. Our goal is always deeper friendship with Jesus Christ, which leads to union (communion) with Him, most especially in Holy Communion. The overview should be in the mind and heart of each catechist and parent so that it forms the foundation of our understanding of the Faith.

What is the function of the Scope? The Scope provides a close look at twelve essentials of the Faith, and shows the progression of the deepening of each doctrine from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The Scope assists the religious educator to know what was taught in previous years and what should be the focus for the twelve subject areas in the current grade.

Why is God's Plan of Salvation History – the Story of the Bible included in the first section? At the beginning of each year, God's Plan of Salvation History (the Story of God's family) is to be presented, always adapting the teaching to the respective grade level. God's Plan of Salvation History provides the context for all the content of our catechesis. Each and every teaching of the Faith that follows is then presented in the light of this Story of God's Plan for us (*General Directory for Catechesis*, #128). Sacred Art, the captions that go under the Sacred Art, if displayed as a timeline on the wall, and a teaching outline for presenting God's Plan can be downloaded from the Diocesan website:

www.dioceseoflacrosse/offices&ministries/catechesis/SalvationHistoryinArtwork

What is included in each grade level? The Introduction of each grade level specifies our goal in catechesis: a personal encounter and communion with Jesus Christ (*On Catechesis in our Time*, #5 hereafter CT, Pope John Paul II). The means that we have to accomplish our goal are 1) Sacred Scripture, 2) relaying the Story of the Bible which is the Story of God's Plan of Salvation History, 3) the content of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and 4) the witness of a catechist who has a personal relationship with Our Lord that is based upon a daily prayer life and is strengthened through receiving the Sacraments.

Each grade level also contains a Student Profile. This Profile identifies the Characteristics, Faith Development Needs as well as the Implications that are the result of the Faith Development Needs.

The actual Curriculum Guidelines are presented under the headings of the four pillars of the Catechism: Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ and Prayer. In addition to the foundational points under each of the four pillars, Scripture references are included so that the catechist can begin each session with a Bible verse(s) that is the Scriptural driving force of the teaching. The choice of Bible passages will also work well with the "Praying with Scripture" format (*lectio divina*), found on the diocesan website. The Prayer section contains the prayers that are to be memorized for each grade level. Furthermore, a fifth section provides the foundational teachings on the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints as well as recommendations of the lives of specific saints to be studied for different age groups. The final page(s) contains Vocabulary Words, distinguishing between new words and previous words. It is up to the DRE or CRE to decide if it would be helpful to give the Vocabulary to the catechists.

What is another way that Scripture can be integrated into a teaching session? The Religion Curriculum presents many tools to assist the catechists. For example, a catechist can easily select a Scripture verse and/or a foundational truth that is related to the teaching to be memorized by the class. As Pope John Paul II so poignantly taught: "The blossoms, if we call them that, of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis" (CT #55).

We would like to thank all the DRE's, CRE's, catechists, Catholic School teachers and parents who helped to review the Religion Curriculum. Your time, suggestions and prayers are most appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the Religion Curriculum, please e-mail Ann Lankford at alankford@dioceseoflacrosse.com.