

PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE JUNIOR HIGH CATECHETICAL CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Theme: To Prepare each young person to live in the Christian community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.

As Parents you are the first to nurture a love of God in your child. You introduce and model your faith for your child. We invite you to more fully understand what this year will bring to your child as they grow in their faith through the instruction they receive. In the Community Life component of the Junior High curriculum we hope to help each young person understand their role in the Catholic Church community and to encourage participation in the life of the Church.

The Junior High curriculum guidelines have been organized to present a systematic, organic and comprehensive catechesis. At the backbone of the curriculum are the Six Tasks of Catechesis which are presented in the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops' directives for passing on the Faith. In the Junior High Curriculum the Six Tasks of Catechesis are presented in six units. Each unit focuses on one of the Tasks. Included in this pamphlet is a brief outline of the community component your child should be exposed to during this year. To find the complete curriculum guidelines for Junior High, including references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Scripture, as well as vocabulary resources, visit <http://www.diocesefwsb.org> and look under the Office of Catechesis.

While Christ was on earth He formed His disciples by instructing them, praying with them, showing them how to live, and by passing down His mission to them. The *National Directory for Catechesis* has outlined Six Tasks that can best shape us in our Catholic Faith. All six Tasks are covered at the Junior High Level. Each grade level focuses on three of the Six Tasks. Below is a summary of information introduced in the Community Life component of the Junior High Curriculum:

SESSION ONE: THE CHURCH ON EARTH AS COMMUNITY

- God created each person to know, love and serve Him in this world so that they may have eternal joy with Him for all eternity in Heaven.
- The Kingdom of God begins for each person on earth. When a person receives the Sacrament of Baptism, they begin a new life of grace and participate in the life of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ gave the eight Beatitudes. The Beatitudes describe the ways a person should live on earth so that they may enter the Kingdom of God in Heaven for all eternity.
- The Kingdom of God on earth is also found in the life of the Catholic Church where people gather in community as the People of God striving to be holy and to live in accord with God's plan of love.
- One becomes part of God's community, the People of God, through the Sacrament of Baptism and by living a life of faith.
- The Church is also called the Body of Christ. Through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Sacramental Life of the Church, most especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the community of God's people live in a unity of love, as a people preparing to be worthy of the Kingdom of God for all eternity in heaven.
- The Catholic Church on earth is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.
- The Church on earth is lead by the Pope in Rome. Our current Pope is Pope Benedict XVI.
- The Pope, along with his cardinals and bishops, form the Magisterium of the Church. The Magisterium is the supreme teaching office in the Church which teaches on faith and morals.
- Each diocese has a bishop who is in union with the Pope. Our current Bishop is Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.
- Each diocese has many parishes. A parish has a Pastor (Priest) who provides the Sacramental Life for the people.

SESSION TWO: VOCATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

- A vocation is a call God gives to each person. The Church helps people to live their vocation, growing in their love for God.
- There are three distinct vocations in the Church: Laity, Priesthood, and Consecrated Life.
- Each vocation serves the Church and is a means for achieving holiness.
- The majority of people are called to live their vocation as faithful laity. The laity are all baptized Catholics who have not been called to the priesthood or the consecrated life. All the members of the laity or (lay people) have a special call to holiness. They are called to bring the spirit of Christ to the places they work by their integrity in the work place, honesty, treatment of others in Christ-like ways, etc.
- Within the Sacrament of Holy Orders there are three callings: deacon, priest, and bishop.
- A Bishop is the Shepherd and teacher of a diocese. He ordains priests who, through the Sacrament of Holy orders, become "other Christs", providing for all people the Sacramental Life of the Church.
- Deacons are ordained to assist the Bishop. They are the sign of Christ the Servant.
- Throughout the history of the Church, consecrated men and women have dedicated their lives to service and prayer for the sake of strengthening the Kingdom of God on earth.

- The most well known form of consecrated life is that of Religious Institutes (Religious Orders/Religious Communities). Those who live in religious communities take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.
- Some communities are known as apostolic orders, which live an active life, committing themselves to prayer and service to the Church.
- Other communities are known as a contemplative orders, which commit themselves to live a life of prayer and contemplation.

SESSION THREE: COMMUNION OF SAINTS

- The ‘Communion of Saints’ is the union of all those who are united to Christ in one body, the Church.
- There are three groups which make up the Communion of Saints: namely the faithful on earth; those who have died and are being purified of their sins and its effects in Purgatory; and those who are with God in heaven.
- Members of the Communion of Saints have communion in faith. They all shared the same Catholic Faith given by Christ to the Apostles.
- Members of the Communion of Saints have communion in the sacraments, most especially in the Eucharist; because the sacraments bring their good fruits to all members, unite each member to God and to each other.
- The three groups which make up the Communion of Saints each have a special role to play in helping the other members of the Church

SESSION FOUR: MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

- Mary is a very important member of the Communion of Saints because she was Christ’s first disciple. Mary plays a very special role in the Church.
- By a special grace from God she was privileged to be born without the stain of original sin. She was immaculately conceived.
- Mary’s motherhood is totally divine. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit meaning that He did not have an earthly biological father. God’s only Son became flesh in the womb of Mary. She is considered “blessed” among women.
- Mary is Mother of the Church because she is united to Christ. Everything that she does points us to Christ. Each person can look to Mary as their own mother and turn to her in time of need.

SESSION FIVE: ETERNAL LIFE

- Many people in today’s world do not take seriously that life on earth is a journey towards another form of life; eternal life.
- Because each person has inherited the sinful tendency brought about by Adam and Eve’s turning against God, ‘bodily death’ occurs.
- The purpose of Jesus’ coming to earth to suffer, die, and rise again was to overcome the results of sin and evil.
- The Last Things refer to: particular judgment; heaven, purgatory, hell, and the last judgment.
- At the time of death, each person experiences a ‘particular judgment’.
- Heaven is the state of eternal life in the joy of a perfect life with the Holy Trinity, with Mary, the angels and all those who during their life on earth lived as the Church taught them.
- Purgatory is an experience of purification.
- Those who die without having chosen to love God on earth, or are unrepentant of serious sin, have chosen their own fate. If they live in defiance of God, they ultimately choose hell which means a separation from God for all eternity.
- The Church teaches that there will be a ‘Last Judgment’. This is also referred to as the Second Coming. This will occur at the end of the world. At the Second Coming the Church teaches that each person’s body and soul will be reunited. God will judge each person according to their deeds.

VOCABULARY

Anne	Annunciation	Apostolic
Apostolic Orders	Assumption	Beatitudes
Bishop	Body of Christ	Cardinal
Catholic	Charism	Charity
Chastity	Communion of Saints	Consecrated Life
Consecrated Virgin	Contemplative Orders	Covenant
Deacon	Death	Diocese
Eternal Life	Faith	Free Will
Grace	Hail Mary	Heaven
Hell	Hermit	Holy
Holy Orders	Immaculate Conception	Joachim
Joseph	Kingdom of God	Laity
Last Things	Love	Magnificat
Marriage	Mary	Mother of the Church
Obedience	One	Original Sin
Parish	Particular Judgment	Pastor
Permanent	Pope	Pope Benedict XVI
Priest	Purgatory	Religious Institutes
Sacraments	Second Coming	Secular Institutes
Sermon on the Mount	Single Life	Son of God
Ten Commandments	Transitional	Trinity
Vocation	Widow	