

# PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE JUNIOR HIGH CATECHETICAL CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

**Theme:** To promote a missionary spirit that prepares each young person to be present as a Christian in society.

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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 Church History and Missionary Spirit component of the Junior High curriculum we hope to help each young person recognize the missionary call of their Baptism and to gain an awareness of the historical events 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 missionary spirit 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 Church History and Missionary Spirit component of the Junior High Curriculum:

### **LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY**

- The study of the history of our Faith is very important; it teaches about our past and helps to form our future in a way that is faithful to what God has revealed over the centuries.
- In the study of Church history the saints play a highly significant role. They are the people who spread the Good News of Christ to all corners of the earth. It is the saints who are the missionaries of the Church who, through their willing hands, brought the saving love of Christ to all people. Through the story of the Church it can be seen that the saints act as missionaries in many different ways. Some go to foreign lands to preach the Gospel, some stay in their home towns, others lead contemplative lives and spread God's love through their prayer.
- The Catholic Church is a missionary Church because each member of the Body of Christ is called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. Each person has the responsibility to missionary activity. Most Christians participate in the Church's missionary call by living a good, holy life and performing good works for the poor and helpless around them.
- When studying history it is important to remember that it is a story of humankind. As we know from our Faith, mankind is sinful, is weak, and makes mistakes. Even when the people in the Church strayed from God's plan, God remained with the Church He founded. It is the people in the Church who sinned, not the Church Herself.
- However, history is not just the story of humankind; it is also the story of God's redeeming love for people. His love was so strong that He called Abraham, the father of God's chosen people, out of the desert and made Abraham's descendants His chosen people. He led His chosen people when they were faithful and did not abandon them when they sinned. Through Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, God brought salvation to all people. In the fullness of time He sent His only Son into the world to suffer and die for each person's sins so that all people would be drawn back to Him. The study of Church history is the study of how God's love intervenes in the lives of humankind to bring all people to perfection in Christ. It is the story of salvation.

### **LESSON TWO: A.D. 33-100 FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH**

- "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19). With these words Christ instituted the Church on earth. In the early years of Christianity the Apostles and their followers began to discuss the beliefs taught to them by Christ and began to write them down for future generations.

### **LESSON THREE: A.D. 100-300 GROWTH AMID PERSECUTION**

- One early Christian observed that the "blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." In the early years of the Catholic Church, Christians were heavily persecuted by Jews and Romans alike. Throughout this era, Christians were able to have the courage to stay true to the Faith despite the threat of death. Unfortunately, very early in the Church some people began to teach erroneously. The Church Fathers, wanting no one to be led astray, were quick to define what the Church believed.

## **LESSON FOUR: A.D. 300-450 FATHERS OF THE CHURCH**

- The age of the Fathers of the Church brought sweeping changes to the Roman world and to Christianity. When Christianity was legalized by Emperor Constantine, new ways of holiness began to be prominent. No longer focusing on remaining hidden, the Church began the process of clarifying what She believed.

## **LESSON FIVE: A.D. 450-1100 ROMAN CHURCH OF THE WEST**

- In the late fifth century, the Roman Empire continued to crumble due to a weak government and invading Germanic tribes from the north. Through God's grace the Church had very strong and capable supreme pontiffs at this time who were an essential force in keeping order and caring for the needs of the people.

## **LESSON SIX: A.D. 1100-1400 MIDDLE AGES**

- The Middle Ages were a time of hardship for the average Christian as plague, famine and war were part of their everyday lives. Although the people of this era made mistakes, the importance of the intellectual and spiritual wisdom of this time should not be overlooked.

## **LESSON SEVEN: A.D. 1400-1600 RENAISSANCE AND REFORM**

- The age of the Renaissance and Reform began as a new flowering of culture and art. It is during this age that the great painters and sculptors perfected their craft. However, it remained a very difficult time for the average Christian because the plague, famine, and war of the Middle Ages endured. The true tragedy of this age is the wound that resulted in Christian unity after the Protestant Reformation.

## **LESSON EIGHT: A.D. 1500-1750 AGE OF EXPLORATION**

- The next age of the Church was an age of great exploration and missionary expansion. As Europe began to expand its influence westward, the Church endeavored to bring the good news of Christ to the people of the new western frontier. This age produced great missionary Saints who gave their entire lives, sometimes literally, to evangelize the world.

## **LESSON NINE: A.D. 1750-1850 AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

- The age of the Enlightenment was a very difficult age for the Church. New scientific theories were placing reason over faith and questioning the need for religion. The French Revolution was violently anti-Christian and tried to eradicate religion from Europe. However, throughout this difficult period in Europe the Church held strong to Her beliefs and survived.

## **LESSON TEN: A.D. 1850-PRESENT MODERN ERA**

- The modern era, like many other times, is characterized by great change in the world and in the Church. At the dawn of the modern era the countries we know today were still forming, and the map changed dramatically with the two World Wars. The Church also experience challenges, blessings and growth. The two Ecumenical Councils were especially important moments in the life of the Church.

## **LESSON ELEVEN: A.D. 1500-:PRESENT THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

- The Church in the United States began in the late fifteenth century when Spanish Catholic explorers set foot in modern day Florida. Over the course of five centuries the Church has gone from a discriminated minority to a sizable group with a great deal of influence.

# VOCABULARY

Apologist	Apostles (the twelve)	Apostolic Fathers	Apostolic Succession
Archbishop John Francis Noll	Arianism	Assumption	Bishop
Bp. Herman Joseph Alerding	Bp. John Carroll	Bp. John Henry Luers	Bp. John Michael D'Arcy
Bp. Joseph Dwenger, C.P.P.S.	Bp. Joseph James Rademacher	Bp. Kevin C. Rhoades	Bp. Leo Aloysius Pursley
Bp. William Edward McManus	Black Plague	Blood of Christ	Body of Christ
Catacombs	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>	Church	Clunian Reform
College of Cardinals	Common Good	Communal Monasticism	Communion of Saints
Conclave	Concordat of 1801	Council of Chalcedon	Council of Constantinople
Council of Ephesus	Council of Jerusalem	Council of Nicaea	Council of Trent
Creed	Crusades	Cult of the Saints	Deism
Dignity of the Human Person	Diocese	Doctors of the Church	Dogma
Ecumenical Council	Ecumenism	Edict of Milan	Enlightenment
Eucharist	Father Badin	Father Julian Benoit	Fathers of the Church
First Vatican Council	French Revolution	Galileo	Gentiles
Gnosticism	Gospels	Great Schism of the Eastern and Western Church	Great Schism of the Papacy
Gregorian Reform	Heresy	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>	Immaculate Conception
Indulgences	Infallibility	Inquisition	Jerusalem
Jewish	Kerygma	Kingdom of God	Lateran Treaty
Lay Investiture	Martin Luther	Martyr	Mendicant Orders
Missionary	Modernism	Monasteries	Monasticism
Mystical Spirituality	Nestorianism	North American Martyrs	Old Covenant
Patron Saint	Pentecost	Pontiff	Pope
Pope Benedict XV	Pope Benedict XVI	Pope John Paul I	Pope John Paul II
Pope John XXIII	Pope Paul VI	Pope Pius X	Pope Pius XI
Protestant Reformation	Purgatory	Rationalism	Renaissance
Rule of St. Benedict	Sacred Scripture	Sacred Tradition	Saints
Second Vatican Council	See	Son of God	St. Mother Theodore Guerin
St. Paul	St. Peter	Stigmata	Transubstantiation
Vulgate	World War I	World War II	