

# PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE JUNIOR HIGH CATECHETICAL CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

**Theme:** To promote moral formation in Jesus Christ through study of the Ten Commandments.

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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 Morality component of the Junior High curriculum we hope to help each young person learn what it means to live as a follower of Christ by outlining the fundamental moral principles.

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 morality 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.diocesesfwsb.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 Morality component of the Junior High Curriculum:

### **LESSON ONE: LIVING AS A CREATURE OF GOD**

- God is love; in Himself He lives a mystery of personal, loving communion as Father, Son, and Spirit. We call this mystery the Holy Trinity.
- God desires to have a special relationship with each person. He is constantly drawing each person closer to Him in a deep friendship.
- God created human persons in His own image and likeness. Each person is a unity of body and soul. Our souls have the spiritual powers of reason and free will. Our reason enables us to understand what is right and good, and our free will enables us to choose it.
- Because we are created in the image and likeness of God who is Love, our fundamental vocation in life is to become a loving person.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God and His commandment to them. Their first sin, original sin, is transmitted to each of their descendants. The effect of original sin is a tendency towards sin called concupiscence.
- Out of love for His creation, God promised that a Savior would come and redeem the world. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this promise.

### **LESSON TWO: LIVING AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST**

- The natural moral law, present in the heart of each person and established by reason, enables us to discern between good and evil.
- Even though each person is instilled with natural law not everyone clearly recognizes it. Thus, each person must form their conscience because it helps them recognize what is right and wrong.
- One way for a person to live as a follower of Christ is to follow the precepts of the Church. The precepts are:
  - To attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation.
  - To confess sins at least once a year. (Anyone conscious of a mortal sin should seek reconciliation immediately.)
  - To receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.
  - To observe the proscribed days of fasting and abstinence.
  - To help provide for the needs of the Church.

### **LESSON THREE: MAKING A MORAL DECISION**

- It is very important for each person to form their conscience in order to make good judgments that lead to a moral life. The formation of the conscience is a life long process that takes time and effort.
- God gave all people the gift of the Church to guide them in the formation of their conscience. Through the sacraments, God gives graces to help strengthen his people to make right decisions and become loving people.
- Each person should take time to think and learn to listen to his or her conscience before they act.
- Sin is a deliberate choice to disobey God. A person cannot sin by accident. Mortal sin destroys the very life of God within us. Venial sin strains our relationship with God.

### **LESSON FOUR: HONORING GOD**

- The First Commandment – “I am the Lord, your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.”
  - The first commandment calls each person to love God above all other things.
- The Second Commandment – “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”
  - Each person must show great respect for God and for His name. To misuse God’s name shows a lack of respect due to God.
- The Third Commandment – “Remember the Sabbath day.”
  - For Christians, the Lord’s Day is Sunday. Sunday fulfills the requirements of the third commandment because it is set aside as a day of rest honoring God. Attendance at Sunday Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation is one of the precepts of the Catholic Church.

### **LESSON FIVE: HONORING FAMILY**

- The Fourth Commandment – “Honor thy father and mother.”
  - Each person should honor his or her parents by giving them: obedience, respect, gratitude, and assistance.
  - Through the Sacrament of Marriage, parents are given a special grace to raise their children. This grace gives them authority that should be respected and obeyed. The Sacrament also calls them to be the primary teachers of their children in all areas of their life especially their faith.

### **LESSON SIX: RESPECT FOR LIFE**

- The Fifth Commandment – “You shall not kill.”
  - The fact that human beings are made in the image of God implies that human life is sacred. Human life begins at conception. Thus, from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death, human life must be protected and nurtured.
  - Murder, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, use of contraceptives and unjust war are all sins and offenses against the dignity of human life.
  - Bullying does not respect the dignity of another person. To maliciously make fun of someone or to violently threaten them does not give their feelings or body the respect that is due to them.

## **LESSON SEVEN: LIVING CHASTITY**

- The Sixth Commandment & the Ninth Commandment – “You shall not commit adultery.” & “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.”
  - The sixth and the ninth commandment instruct us to live a life of chastity.
  - The virtue of chastity ensures that our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions respect the beautiful gift of God’s love which He gives to a man and a woman in the Sacrament of Matrimony. Adultery, lust, impure thoughts and actions, homosexual behavior, immodest dress and behavior, and pornography are all offenses against the sixth and ninth commandments.

## **LESSON EIGHT: RESPECTING TRUTH AND MATERIAL GOODS**

- The Seventh Commandment – “You shall not steal.”
  - This commandment guards against theft of goods or anything that is rightfully due to someone. For example: Unlawfully downloading music or movies off the internet without paying does not give the company or the artist what is due to them for their product.
- The Eighth Commandment – “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”
  - This commandment instructs each person to always tell the truth.
  - To gossip or to speak untruths or harmful things about another does not respect their dignity and goes against the eighth commandment.
- The Tenth Commandment – “You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.”
  - The tenth commandment forbids greed, avarice, and envy.

## **LESSON NINE: LIVING A MORAL LIFE**

- The human person is both a bodily and a spiritual being. The human body is meant to express the person and shares in our vocation to love.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the Beatitudes. They are at the heart of the teachings of Christ.
- Virtues strengthen the moral life. A virtue is a good habit that helps us to do what is right. The Cardinal Virtues are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The Theological Virtues are: faith, hope, and love (charity).

## **LESSON TEN: LIVING JUSTICE AND SERVICE**

- God calls each person to be witnesses of Christ to the world by imitating Christ and sharing His teachings. This must come from a true love and respect for God.
- The Works of Mercy are ways of serving our neighbor by aiding them in their spiritual and bodily needs.
- The Corporal Works of Mercy are:
  - Feed the hungry.
  - Give drink to the thirsty.
  - Clothe the naked.
  - Visit those in prison.

- Shelter the homeless.
- Visit the sick.
- Bury the dead.
- The Spiritual Works of Mercy are:
  - Admonish the sinner.
  - Instruct the ignorant.
  - Counsel the doubtful.
  - Comfort the sorrowful.
  - Bear wrongs patiently.
  - Forgive all injuries.
  - Pray for the living and the dead.

### **LESSON ELEVEN: THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

- As human beings we are not perfect and living a moral life is not an easy task. We do not need to despair, however, because God has given us a great gift. He offers each person His forgiveness and His grace.
- God gave the Church the beautiful gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that each person might confess their sins, be absolved of their sin, and receive sanctifying grace.
- Reconciliation is the sacrament by which each person receives God's merciful forgiveness for personal sins.
- Before receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation each person must perform an examination of conscience.
- In order to receive the Sacrament, a person must confess all mortal and venial sins he or she can remember.
- Monthly confession, even in the absence of mortal sin, is advised because it strengthens our relationship with God.

## **AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

God gives each person the free will to choose what is morally good or to choose what is morally wrong. Everyone fails to choose what is morally good at some time during their life. When we do this we commit sin. Sin not only hurts the person who sins but also hurts the entire Church. Happy for us we have a loving and forgiving God who is quick to forget our offenses. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we have an opportunity to confess our sins, express sorrow for our sins, receive absolution (God's forgiveness) and do an act of penance given to us by the priest. Before going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation each person should take some time and carefully examine their conscience. Below is one example of an examination of conscience. Find a quiet place and slowly read through these questions.

### **THE FIRST COMMANDMENT ~ "I AM THE LORD, YOUR GOD: YOU SHALL NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME."**

Has my love of something been placed before my love for God?

Have I spent more time and effort on myself or material things than my relationship with God?

Have I practiced worship of any other god?

### **THE SECOND COMMANDMENT ~ "YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN."**

Have I used the name of God in a disrespectful and inappropriate manner?

Have I blasphemed by speaking with contempt about God, the Church, or the saints?

Have I lied under an oath or promise that I spoke the truth?

Have I used vulgar language directed towards God?

### **THE THIRD COMMANDMENT ~ "REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY."**

Have I freely chosen to miss Sunday Mass because I did not want to go?

Have I missed Mass on a Holy Day of Obligation?

### **THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT ~ "HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER."**

Have I obeyed my parents?

Have I spoken or thought disrespectfully to my parents?

Have I shown disrespect to my teachers, civil authorities, and elder family members in my thoughts or actions?

### **THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT ~ "YOU SHALL NOT KILL."**

Have I acted out of uncontrolled anger?

Have I used food or exercise in a way that is unhealthy for my body?

Have I used drugs or alcohol?

Have I respected life through my thoughts, words, and actions?

Have I acted in a way or with the intent to lead another to sin?

Have I intentionally harmed myself or another physically or verbally?

## **THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENT ~ “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.” & “YOU SHALL NOT COVERT YOUR NEIGHBOR’S WIFE.”**

Have I dressed immodestly?

Have I acted with the intent to draw inappropriate attention to my body and sexuality?

Have I used vulgar language that disrespects the body and sexuality?

Have I lived chastely in my thoughts, words, and actions?

Have I treated others with the respect they deserve as a creature of God?

## **THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT ~ “YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.”**

Have I taken something that is not my own without permission or paying or returning it?

Have I intentionally harmed another one of God’s creatures?

Have I littered or intentionally disregarded care for the earth?

## **THE EIGHT COMMANDMENT ~ “YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.”**

Have I lied to anyone?

Have I continued to tell a story that I do not know is true?

Have I shared private information about someone to another?

## **THE TENTH COMMANDMENT ~ “YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S GOODS.”**

Have I focused too much on gaining and retaining earthly goods?

Have I failed to share my money, time, or talent with someone in need despite the opportunity?

Have I felt sad at the good fortune of another?

Have I been happy when something bad happens to another?

## **THE ACT OF CONTRITION**

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ  
suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

# VOCABULARY

Abortion	Absolution	Avarice
Beatitudes	Blasphemy	Capital Sin
Cardinal Virtues	Charity	Chastity
Chosen People	Concupiscence	Confession
Conscience	Contrition	Corporal Works of Mercy
Counsel	Dignity of the Human Person	Diligence
Envy	Eucharist	Euthanasia
Examination of Conscience	Exodus	Faith
Fidelity	Forgiveness	Fortitude
Free Will	Generosity	Gluttony
Gospels	Grace	Greatest Commandments
Greed	Heaven	Holy Days of Obligation
Hope	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>	Idolatry
Justice	Love	Lust
Marriage	Meek	Mercy
Modest/Modesty	Morality	Mortal Sin
Mourn	Natural Moral Law	Original Sin
Peacemakers	Penance	Perjury
Personal Sin	Precepts of the church	Pride
Prudence	Reason	Reconcile
Reconciliation	Reparation	Respect
Sabbath	Sanctifying Grace	Savior
Scandal	Sin	Sloth
Soul	Spiritual	Spiritual Works of Mercy
Suffering	Temperance	Temptation
Ten Commandments	Theological Virtues	Venial Sin
Virtue	Vocation	Witness