



GRADE 1 PARENT PAGE

Parents have the unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators or catechists. They teach by their witness of the faith, through their values and attitudes, by their Christian example of love for Christ and his church. When children are baptized, parents accept the responsibility to raise their children in the practice of the faith...(National Directory for Catechesis 234-235)

Dear Parents,

In a special document entitled *Letter to Families*, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area; they are educators because they are parents" (16). You are the first and best role model for your child in these growing years. Your role as parent to love, teach, and lead your child to Jesus is a remarkable and noble vocation. Congratulations and Thank You for accepting and honoring this God-given role.

At this particular stage of development, first graders are enthusiastic and eager to learn and to socialize. They have a growing desire to interact with peers, but often do not possess the social skills necessary to avoid and resolve conflicts. They are beginning to understand that other people are different from themselves and need to be guided in growth of acceptance of others. Learning to act with respect and responsibility towards others is an important task at this stage, and the need for love, support and approval from parents and other significant adults is real. Attitudes and values that are held within the family shape the child's perception of the world and influence their understanding and experiences.

Your Child's Faith Development

Like other stages of development, your first-grader's faith development is important. Although children at every developmental level have many characteristics in common, each child is unique and will not fit entirely into any model developed. Keep in mind then that your child will come to know and understand the faith at his or her own rate of development. However here are some general points to remember. Children at this age:

- ✠ Grow in their relationship with God particularly through prayer based on life experience
- ✠ Accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people
- ✠ Vest great authority in parents and other trusted adults
- ✠ Desire to join in the ritual of the parish community as seen in the desire to participate in the sacraments
- ✠ Need help in formation of conscience
- ✠ Begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience
- ✠ Need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths
- ✠ Use classes and categories to order actions around them
- ✠ Can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others
- ✠ Begin to order the religious world
- ✠ View rules as inflexible
- ✠ Understand reality best in story form
- ✠ Identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible

- ✠ Identify with stories of the Church (lives of the saints for example)
- ✠ Desire to learn about people and their differences

In this coming year our goal is to work together with you to bring your child to a deeper understanding of God our Father and the ways that He shows His love for us through the many gifts of creation; Jesus, God's Son and our brother, who teaches us about the Father and sends the Holy Spirit to be our helper; and how we become members of the Catholic Church through baptism.

Below are some of the highlights of what your child will be learning this year:

- There are three persons in the Blessed Trinity
- God is a loving Father and the loving Creator of all things
- Jesus is the Son of God, our brother and teacher
- The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to give us gifts of peace, strength and joy.
- Through baptism we are made sons and daughters of God and we become part of God's family.
- God's family includes people of every race, age, culture and ability.
- We belong to the Catholic Church.
- The Eucharist is both a special meal that Jesus shares with us and a sacrifice of his love.
- God always forgives us if we ask and are sorry; God gave us a special sacrament of penance.
- Mary is the Mother of Jesus and Joseph is his foster father.
- Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus and Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

How You Can Help Your Child Grow in Faith

Here are several points that will aid you in helping your child grow in his/her faith.

- ➔ Attend and participate in Sunday Mass as a family.
- ➔ Participate in special events with the parish such as the patron saint's feast, holiday customs and blessings.
- ➔ Help your child to learn and participate in various types of prayer (i.e. quiet reflection, guided meditation, song, spontaneous, petition, thanksgiving, praise and sorrow).
- ➔ Help your child to learn and pray formal prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Prayer before and after meals
- ➔ Participate in activities for advent and lent to appreciate the significance of these liturgical seasons – e.g. advent wreath, stations-of-the-cross for children.
- ➔ Explore ways we can show care for all of God's creation.
- ➔ Talk with your child to help them understand that we must love ALL peoples, even those who are different from us.
- ➔ Discuss the lives of the saints with your children so that they may see examples of people who lived lives of holiness and service in God's name.
- ➔ Read Scripture stories together, some good suggestions are:

Creation – Genesis 1:1-2:4
 Epiphany – Matthew 2:9b-11
 Finding in the Temple – Luke 2:40-52
 Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem – Matthew 21:1-11

Annunciation – Luke 1:26-56
 Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37
 Jesus Blesses the Children – Mark 10:13-16
 Last Supper – Matthew 26:26-29 or Luke 22:14-20

Nativity – Luke 2:1-20
 Zaccheaus – Luke 19:1-10
 Lord's Prayer – Luke 11:1-4
 Resurrection – John 20:1-18

➔ Help your child to become familiar with the following terms:

Advent	altar	Baptism	Bible	Catholic	Christ	Christian	Christmas
Church	create	Family	forgiveness	God	godparent	Holy Spirit	Jesus
Joseph	lent	Mary	Mass	Parish	prayer	priest	Saint

Our diocese provides many resources and materials that will help you better understand the faith and work with your child at home. Among the resources is the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, an adaptation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For more information contact the Office of Catholic Education, Christian Formation at (804) 622-5113 or e-mail Cf@richmonddiocese.org.

Grade 7

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS

Know Your Audience

Just like Jesus, every good catechist knows their audience.

“The catechist – must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.” (NDC #48)

Who Are Your First Graders?

Faith Development

Children at this age:

- ❖ Grow in their relationship with God particularly through prayer based on life experience
- ❖ Vest great authority in parents and other trusted adults
- ❖ Desire to join in the ritual of the parish community as seen in the desire to participate in Penance and Eucharist
- ❖ Need help in formation of conscience
- ❖ Begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience
- ❖ Need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths
- ❖ Use classes and categories to order actions around them
- ❖ Can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others
- ❖ Begin to order the religious world
- ❖ View rules as inflexible
- ❖ Understand reality best in story form
- ❖ Identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible
- ❖ Identify with stories of the Church (lives of the saints for example)
- ❖ Desire to learn about people and their differences
- ❖ Accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people

Grade 1 Catechists

Guiding Principles

Catechists should:

- Help the children begin to acquire basic spiritual attitudes through the expression of gestures, since children relate readily to the language of symbols and gestures. Provide frequent opportunities for the children to engage in ritual: i.e. processions, offerings, praising, and thanking God in prayer and song.
- Help the children move from a moral stage known as self-interest. Endeavor to awaken in them an awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Invite them to reach out to others in love and concern.
- Help the children acquire an image of God through the stories you read and tell. Images later become more mature concepts and feelings about God. Emphasize the love and providence of God and God's faithfulness by using scripture stories.
- Provide examples of one who is conscious of God's presence in the world, in his or her life; of one who is joyful, and of one who is ever striving to follow Christ more closely. Remember children at this age tend to imitate others.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Tire easily physically and intellectually.
- Have short attention spans.
- Are very active.
- Prefer play over work.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Are centered on "self"; need help in developing relationships; seek to identify self as unique individuals in family, school, and world
- Use "me" a great deal, want desires fulfilled in a short time; only beginning to understand the concept of "our".
- Need boundaries of respect and responsibility set, need to be encouraged to share
- Grow by identifying with adults who must "model" for child
- Exhibit curiosity and enthusiasm
- Open and eager to tell about family; need sensitivity to family situations
- May have developed social skills because of preschool environment
- May give "windows to what is within them" through their drawings
- Boys and girls may prefer to sit, work, play in separate groups

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Can usually think logically about concrete, real objects or personal experience
- Learn best by doing, showing, and experiencing
- Exhibit difficulty in reversing their thought processes in order to give the reasons that may have led up to a conclusion
- Have an excellent facility for memorizing, especially musical or rhyming refrains

NOTES

- ❖ Pope John Paul II in On Catechesis in Our Time encourages the use of advances in pedagogy; biology, sociology as they help us to model God's Divine Pedagogy (teaching us gradually in stages according to our level of development). The above noted information is consistent with such documents as the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catechetical Documents of the Church.
- ❖ The above sciences have limitations. While this information does provide references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken into account.

Knowledge of Faith	Liturgical Education	Moral Education
<p>Creed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes the church worships one God who is almighty and infinite ○ Recognizes that Jesus died and rose for the salvation of God’s people ○ Develops an awareness that God created the world <p>Tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes the Bible as a special book of God’s word ○ Recognizes our responsibility to care for the gift of creation 	<p>Sacraments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes sacraments as seven special signs of God’s love ○ Identifies the Sacraments of Initiation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baptism: become members of God’s family 2. Confirmation: helps us live and share faith 3. Eucharist: feeds us with the Body of Christ as spiritual food ○ Experiences the Mass as a celebration of God’s love for us <p>Liturgical Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies Advent as a special time to prepare for Christ’s coming to us ○ Begins to understand how Lent is a time to remember how Jesus died for love of us ○ Begins to understand how Easter is the holiest season of the Church year <p>Gestures/Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses holy water for blessing in Church ○ Genuflects on right knee 	<p>A Disciple of Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes we make choices to love God and others ○ Develops an awareness of need to be sorry for our wrongful actions ○ Develops an understanding that the Church forgives in God’s name ○ Articulates the Great Commandment: to love God and others
Scripture		
Genesis 1: 1-2:3 – Creation Story	Luke 22: 13-20 – Last Supper Luke 2: 1-20 – Nativity Luke 24: 1-12 – Easter Story	Matthew 22: 34-39 – Great Commandment
Vocabulary		
Adam and Eve Church Creation God	Miracle Religion Soul	Advent Baptism Christmas Confirmation Easter Genuflect
	Lent Mass Praise Sacrament	Commandment Disciple Forgiveness Peace

Teaching to Pray	Education for Community Life	Missionary Initiation
<p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forms friendship with God through prayer ○ Introduces Guided Meditation <p>Memorized Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sign of Cross ○ Lord’s Prayer ○ Hail Mary ○ Doxology ○ Angel of God <p>Liturgical Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses psalm verses to pray ○ Knows responses to Mass: The Lord be with you...; Lord, have mercy ○ Prays General Intercessions 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes the name of the local parish ○ Experiences how the parish community works together <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates an understanding that saints are honored as holy people ○ Appreciates how the church honors Mary as the Mother of God <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes that family and friends make up the church community ○ Appreciates the need for forgiveness in community 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes how the parish helps many people <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relates ways to showing love by living the Gospel <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appreciates that people are invited to service in their parishes ○
Scripture		
<p>Psalm 100: 1-2 – Shout Joyfully to the Lord... Psalm 118: 24 – This is the Day the Lord Has Made</p>	<p>Matthew 19: 13-15 – Jesus Blesses the Children Luke 10: 29-39 – Good Samaritan</p>	<p>Mark 8: 22-25 – Jesus Helps People</p>
Vocabulary		
<p>Angel Bible Lord’s Prayer Heaven Prayer</p>	<p>Church Community Forgiveness Mary Parish Pastor</p>	<p>Apostles Respect Saints Sharing</p>

Catechetical Curriculum

Grade 1 Key Concepts

Liturgical Year

ORDINARY TIME (Fall and January)

- K Recognizes the church worships one God who is almighty and infinite
- LE Identifies the Sacraments of Initiation:
 - 1. Baptism: become members of God's family
 - 2. Confirmation: helps us live and share faith
 - 3. Eucharist: feeds us with the Body of Christ as spiritual food
- CL Recognizes the name of the local parish
- CL Experiences how the parish community works together

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- CL Demonstrates an understanding that saints are honored as holy people
- MI Relates ways to showing love by living the Gospel

ADVENT

- LE Identifies Advent as a special time to prepare for Christ's coming to us
Luke 2: 1-20 - Nativity

LENT

- K Recognizes the Jesus died and rose for the salvation of God's people
- LE Begins to understand how Lent is a time to remember how Jesus died for love of us
- ME Recognizes we make choices to love God and others
- ME Develops an awareness of need to be sorry for our wrongful actions
- ME Develops an understanding that the Church forgives in God's name
- ME Articulates the Great Commandment: to love God and others
Matthew 22: 34-39 – Great Commandment

EASTER (April – May)

- K Develops an awareness that God created the world
Genesis 1:1-2:3 – Creation Story
- K Recognizes our responsibility to care for the gift of creation
- LE Begins to understand how Easter is the holiest season of the Church year
Luke 24: 1-12 – Easter Story
- CL Appreciates how the church honors Mary as the Mother of God
- MI Appreciates that people are invited to service in their parishes
Mark 8: 22-25 – Jesus Helps People

ALL THE TIME

- K Recognizes the Bible as a special book of God's word
- LE Recognizes sacraments as seven special signs of God's love
- LE Experience the Mass as a celebration of God's love for us
- LE Uses holy water for blessing in Church
- LE Genuflects on right knee
- P Forms friendship with God through prayer
- P Introduces Guided Meditation
- P Memorized Prayer: Sign of Cross, Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Doxology, Angel of God
- P Uses psalm verses to pray
- P Knows responses to Mass: The Lord be with you....; Lord, have mercy
- P Prays General Intercessions
Psalm 118: 24 – This is the Day the Lord Has Made
- CL Recognizes that family and friends make up the church community
Matthew 19: 13-15 – Jesus Blesses the Children
- CL Appreciates the need for forgiveness in community
Luke 10: 29-39 – Good Samaritan
- MI Recognizes how the parish helps many people

Legend:

K = Knowledge of Faith

LE = Liturgical Education

ME = Moral Education

P = Teaching to Pray

CL = Education for Community Life

MI = Missionary Life