



GRADE 3 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.

Third graders have a great fascination with heroes. They admire their parents and teachers and they begin to form attitudes based largely on the attitudes they perceive in them. Your witness of the faith and example of good Catholic practice is vital at this stage, because you are your child's hero and he/she wants to follow your lead. Remember, there is no greater influence on your child's faith development than you.

Your Child's Faith Development

Like other stages of development, your third-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 that your child will come to know and understand the faith at his or her own rate of development. Here are some general points to remember.

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; view rules as inflexible
- ✚ Begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience
- ✚ Need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths
- ✚ Can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others
- ✚ Identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible and with the stories of the Church (i.e. lives of the saints)
- ✚ Desire to learn about people and their differences; accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people

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) 359-5661 or e-mail Cf@richmonddiocese.org.

How You Can Help Your Child Grow In Faith

This year your child will continue to learn more about the Church and the importance of belonging, participating, and sharing in the faith community—the life of the Church. He/she will learn about the apostles and their successors—the Church’s hierarchy—the pope, bishops, priests. Your child will learn that the Church continues the work of Jesus today by sharing the Good News, celebrating the sacraments and serving all God’s people.

Here are several points that will assist you over the course of this year, to help your child grow in his/her faith.

- ➔ Attend and participate in Sunday Mass as a family. Afterward, talk about some of the things that took place during Mass—the sounds, sights, smells, their experience of church—belonging, community, participation.
- ➔ Relate belonging to the family of God (church community) to their experiences of belonging to your family—discuss celebrations, rituals, symbols, prayer; family mealtime; sharing stories, songs, activities; forgiveness, giving thanks; helping family members and neighbors.
- ➔ Help your child identify ways to participate in your parish. Stress the importance of service to others by volunteering our time and talents.
- ➔ Discuss ways in which your child can spread the good news about Jesus (i.e. example to others, helping in the community/neighborhood, acts of kindness). Explain that Jesus works through us to reach all people.
- ➔ Help your child become familiar with a Church agency that serves the needs of the community (i.e. food bank, Meals on Wheels).
- ➔ Pray the Apostles’ Creed together. Reflect on the last part of the prayer with your child and discuss the meaning of *one, holy, Catholic* and *apostolic*.
- ➔ Identify the name of the pastor and other priests of your local parish. Visit the diocesan website at www.richmonddiocese.org to identify the bishop and other church leaders and their ministries.
- ➔ Identify the Pope as the successor to St. Peter, the first pope. Using the internet with your child, research and compare the life of St. Peter to that of the current Pope.
- ➔ Surf the internet for information on the lives of Catholic saints. Research with you child his patron saint and those of other family members. Hold a special celebration in honor of your families’ patron saints.
- ➔ Identify Mary as the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church. Explain how Mary is a model of faith and holiness for us. Teach your child how to pray the rosary.
- ➔ Help your child become familiar with stories from the Catholic bible. Identify the four Gospels as Jesus’ story.
- ➔ Pray the following prayers with your child: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Apostles Creed, Grace before and after meals. (If necessary, get the prayers from your child’s parish catechist).

Grade 3

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 Third 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 the stories of the Church (lives of 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 3 Catechists

Guiding Principles

Catechists can:

- Emphasize uniqueness and the people God has given to us who love and care for us. Praise, reward, and appreciate the children. Enhance their self-image by your attitude toward each child. Be an example for the children. Teach them that God loves them--showing them by attitude and action, that they are loved.
- Model Christian behavior for children to emulate because third-graders are in the "hero-worshipping" stage. Utilize stories from scripture and from the lives of the saints which include both heroes and heroines. Concretize experiences by the use of music, spontaneous prayers, and the use of imagination in class reflections.
- Help children develop socially and become more aware of the effect they have on a group. Help the children to choose the good that God wills, reject the wrong, and begin to accept greater responsibility for their actions.
- Stimulate thought by including a variety of methods and activities. Distribute responsibility throughout the group which will enable the children to develop self control.
- Help children to become aware of social ills and human needs resulting from injustice, greed, lack of mercy, violence, and war. Teach them as Christians to use their God-given gifts to respond to the needs of others.
- Assume responsibility for involving the children in prayer and in Christian service.
- Provide example as well as instruction that will encourage the children in a life of prayer and service.

Physical Development

Children at this age:

- Have greater control of large motor activities and increased mastery of fine motor skills.
- Enjoy group activities because of improved body coordination.

Social and Emotional Development

Children at this age:

- Are in an age of "I" and "you."
- Have increased awareness of social sense; may begin to feel pre-adolescent pressure to wear the right clothes, etc.
- Are more ready to share than at an earlier age, sometimes even caring for younger children.
- Begin to place great emphasis on friendships (best friends begin to develop); best friends may be good dialogue partners in group discussions
- Can cooperate in group experiences (with about 4 or 5 others); boys and girls may work best in separate groups; do not want to be criticized or embarrassed in front of the group.
- Grow into making observations about the world around them, and exercise curiosity for life.
- Can begin to take responsibility for planning (i.e. prayer service).

Cognitive Development

Children at this age:

- Can do more logical thinking with concrete objects and events in the present.
- Begin to be able to see things from another's point of view, though not consistently.
- Are rapidly developing communication skills.
- Have speaking vocabularies which exceed reading vocabularies.
- Have an increasing ability to talk with others and not simply to them.
- Are enthusiastic. Are at peak creativity.
- Are developing the self-confidence needed to work on projects.
- Are interested in learning games.
- Begin to be "data" collectors.
- Display curiosity about life, nature, and people, but are able to learn more readily from their observations.
- Are mastering the ability to read and enjoy using this skill.

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"> o Deepens an understanding of Trinity: Father as Creator, Son as Savior, Holy Spirit as Sanctifier and Helper o Identifies the four marks of the Church: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic o Explores the Church's teaching about Jesus' second coming and final judgment <p>Tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Experiences the parish as family o Appreciates their role as disciples of Jesus Christ 	<p>Participates regularly in Sunday worship</p> <p>Sacraments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identifies the sacraments of healing: reconciliation and anointing of the sick o Identifies the sacraments of service: marriage and holy orders <p>Liturgical Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Understands liturgy as the public worship of the Church o Develops an appreciation of entering more deeply into the paschal mystery through participation in the liturgical year <p>Gestures/Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identifies items found in worship space of the church o Identifies the sanctuary 	<p>A Disciple of Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Explores the scriptures to understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus o Recognizes the need to act responsibly o Continues to expand understanding of forgiveness and healing o Gives examples of how to work for justice and peace o Demonstrates an understanding that the Ten Commandments serve as a guide to living as a disciple of Jesus
Scripture		
Ephesians 4: 4-6 – There is One Lord...	Exodus 4: 1-8 – Call of Moses Exodus 16: 1-15 – Exodus Story of Quail and Manna	Matthew 18: 21-35 – Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
Vocabulary		
<p>Apostolic Catholic Holy One Sanctifier</p>	<p>Ambo Baptistry Book of Gospels Holy Orders Matrimony Liturgy Missal Oil of sick</p>	<p>Healing Justice Parable Responsibility</p>

Teaching to Pray	Education for Community Life	Missionary Initiation
<p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Realizes need for prayer daily o Differentiates between private and communal prayer <p>Memorized Prayer/Precepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Apostles' Creed o Simple Act of Faith, Hope, Love <p>Liturgical Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Confiteor 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Realizes that Christ calls his followers to be united o Identifies how each parish is related to the diocese and to the universal church o Identifies the priest and deacon as ordained servant-leaders in the Church <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Appreciates belonging to the Communion of Saints o Recognizes Mary under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Recognizes how as church each is the light of the world o Begins to appreciate responsibility and act responsibly o Introduce custom of Posada at Christmas 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Understands that God calls the baptized to be saints <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Responds to God's call to be part of the Kingdom of God by service to the poor
Scripture		
Resurrection Stories Acts 2: 1-11 – Pentecost Story	John 17: 20-21 – Jesus prays for his people Matthew 5: 14-16 – You are the light of the world	
Vocabulary		
Communal Prayer Private Prayer	<p>Bishop Church Deacon Diocese Disciples</p>	<p>Pope Posada Priest Vocation</p> <p>Apostle Communion of saints Kingdom of God Mission Prophet</p>

Catechetical Curriculum

Grade 3 Key Concepts

Liturgical Year

ORDINARY TIME (Fall and January)

- K Deepens understanding of Trinity: Father as Creator, Son as Savior, Holy Spirit as Sanctifier/helper
- K Identifies the four marks of the Church: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
Eph. 4: 4-6- There is One Lord...
- ME Explores scriptures to understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus
- LE Understands liturgy as the public worship of the Church
- LE Identifies items found in worship space of church- identifies sanctuary
- ME Demonstrates an understanding that the Ten Commandments serve as a guide to living as a disciple of Jesus
- CL Realizes that Christ calls his followers to be united
John 17: 20-21- Jesus prays for his people
- CL Identifies how each parish is related to the diocese and to the universal church
- CL Identifies the priest/deacon as ordained servant-leaders in the Church
- MI Recognizes how as church each is the light of the world
Matt. 5:14, 16- light of the world

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- CL Appreciates belonging to the Communion of Saints
- MI Understands that God calls the baptized to be saints
- K Explores the Church's teaching about Jesus' second coming and final judgment
- LE Identifies sacraments of healing and service

ADVENT

- Incarnation
- CL Recognizes Mary under title of Our Lady of Guadalupe- only apparition where Mary is pregnant

CHRISTMAS

- CL Introduce custom of Posada

LENT

- CL Responds to God's call to be part of the Kingdom of God by service to the poor
- ME Give examples of how to work for justice/peace
- ME Recognizes the need to act responsibly
- CL Begins to appreciate responsibility and act responsibly
Matt. 18: 21-35- Parable of Unforgiving Servant

EASTER (April – May)

- Paschal Mystery
- LE Develops an appreciation of entering more deeply into the paschal mystery through participation in the liturgical year
Resurrection Stories
Acts 2: 1-11- Pentecost Story

ALL THE TIME

- P Realizes need for prayer daily
- P Memorizes Apostles Creed; Act of Faith, Hope, Love and Confiteor
- P Differentiates between private and communal prayer
- ME Continues to expand understanding of forgiveness and healing
- K Experiences the parish as family
- K Appreciates their role as disciples of Jesus Christ
- ME Demonstrates an understanding that the Ten Commandments serve as a guide to living as a disciple of Jesus
Ex 4: 1-8- Call of Moses
Ex. 16: 1-15- Exodus story of Quail and Manna

Legend:

K = Knowledge of Faith

LE = Liturgical Education

ME = Moral Education

P = Teaching to Pray

CL = Education for Community Life

MI = Missionary Life