



GRADE 4 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.

At this particular stage of development fourth graders begin to view all events in their lives as part of faith. They begin to see themselves in the future through observing the virtues and character of heroes, heroines and mature adults. It is those heroes who help them gain a sense of responsibility and develop care for others in need. A sense of fairness, equality and justice begins to develop. As parents, 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 fourth-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:

- ✚ Continue to grow in their relationship with God through prayer
- ✚ View all events in their lives as part of faith
- ✚ Understand symbols and stories, and religious images of God in a way that can be somewhat literal
- ✚ Need help to develop their own unique God-given gifts
- ✚ Can take greater roles of responsibility in prayer and worship
- ✚ Catch the tradition of the past through stories (scripture, Jesus, stories of the Church). Can identify outstanding role models of the present
- ✚ Begin to glimpse themselves in the future through observing the virtues and character of heroes and heroines and mature adults
- ✚ Respond to lived faith witness by willingness to participate in more systematic presentation of the faith, liturgy, and religious practices
- ✚ Need help to see the reasons behind Church rules, privileges, and responsibilities
- ✚ Need help to understand that God desires the good and happiness of everyone
- ✚ Vest greater importance in their expanding world of school, community, people, and events around the world (the latter brought closer through media, internet etc.

- ✚ Can be introduced to care for the aged, persons with disabilities, the poor in the neighborhood and the world, through their expanded involvement with others outside the home
- ✚ Gain a sense of responsibility and develop care for others by being involved in charitable collections, community clean ups, and other organized events
- ✚ Begin to have a genuine sense of fairness and equality
- ✚ Can take others' views into account in bargaining to meet their own needs
- ✚ Grow in the ability to understand abstract qualities in the future such as justice and injustice by participating now in activities with sharp contrasts between good and evil

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

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 come to learn that everyone has a call to holiness in imitation of Jesus. That we respond to this call by living as members of the Church, by understanding and obeying the Ten Commandments, by following the great commandment of love of God and neighbor, as well as, the beatitudes and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Your child will learn that the Holy Spirit enlightens us and gives us the power to live as Jesus did.

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

- ➔ Attend and participate in Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation as a family.
- ➔ Create opportunities at home to gather and pray together as a family.
- ➔ Help your child to become aware of the needs of others in your immediate neighborhood and beyond. Become familiar with and discuss with your child the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
- ➔ Get involved as a family in charitable events or causes outside the home by volunteering at parish/community events.
- ➔ Make it a practice to go to confession as a family at least seasonally. Discuss the importance of forgiveness and ways in which we can atone for our sins.
- ➔ Discuss with your child ways that he/she can take care of his/her body and respect the bodies of others. Let your child know that you are always available to discuss any issues that might arise.
- ➔ Discuss ways in which friends, society, and media can lead to occasions of sin as well as occasions of grace. Make it a point to mention the importance of safe use of the internet. Talk about some of the

gifts and talents that God has given your child and ways in which he/she can use those gifts and talents to help others.

- ➔ Read the bible passage on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) with your child. Help your child surf the internet or find pictures in magazines that depict the beatitudes and make a collage to hang in his/her room.
- ➔ Identify Mary as the ideal model of faith and holiness for us. Teach your child how to pray the rosary.

Grade 4

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 Fourth Graders?

Faith Development

Children at this age:

- ❖ Continue to grow in their relationship with God through prayer. Can take greater roles of responsibility in prayer and worship.
- ❖ View all events in their lives as part of faith.
- ❖ Understand symbols, stories, and religious images of God in a way that can be somewhat literal.
- ❖ Need help to develop their own unique God-given gifts.
- ❖ Catch the tradition of the past through stories (scripture, Jesus, stories of the Church). Can identify outstanding role models of the present.
- ❖ Begin to glimpse themselves in the future through observing the virtues and character of heroes and heroines and mature adults.
- ❖ Respond to lived faith witness by willingness to participate in more systematic presentation of the faith, liturgy, and religious practices.
- ❖ Need help to see the reasons behind Church rules, privileges, and responsibilities.
- ❖ Need help to understand that God desires the good and happiness of everyone.
- ❖ Vest greater importance in their expanding world of school, community, people, and events around the world (the latter brought closer through media).
- ❖ Can be introduced to care for the aged, persons with disabilities, the poor in the neighborhood and the world, through their expanded involvement with others outside the home.
- ❖ Gain a sense of responsibility and develop care for others by being involved in charitable collections, community clean ups, and other organized events.
- ❖ Begin to have a genuine sense of fairness and equality.
- ❖ Can take others' views into account in bargaining to meet their own needs.
- ❖ Grow in the ability to understand abstract qualities in the future such as justice and injustice by participating now in activities with sharp contrasts between good and evil.

Grade 4 Catechists

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Catechists can:

- Provide reasonable explanations and increased group activities because the children have developed a longer attention span. Augment the docility and the unquestioning acceptance of adult explanations by capitalizing on the children's interest in sharing in small group discussions.
- Foster opportunities to replace interest in fantasy and fairy tale by interest in true-to-life stories that originate in the life of the Church, in their own communities and cultures, as well as in other areas.
- Provide group projects in which all the children can be involved because children learn most effectively when engaged in the learning process.
- Stimulate the children's creativity through music, art, drama, and related activities. Provide an opportunity for them to express and appreciate religious concepts.
- Encourage students to analyze facts and to explore the lived faith of believers, past and present, whose lives they can emulate.
- Continue to offer opportunities for meaningful memorization, particularly of certain essential doctrinal statements.
- Use daily situations and discussions to help students develop skills in moral decision making. Challenge the students to correlate what they say they believe with their actions. Encourage them to do what is right because it is right, whether it pleases the group or not. Stress the reasons and the values underlying the rules, as well as the importance of right motives.
- Include the element of social awareness in prayer experiences and reconciliation services. Move away from a simplified following of the rules and help the children to progress toward a faithful response to a call from the Lord. Make children aware of social ills and human need by helping them to become involved in social justice activities in various ways – e.g. recycling bottles and aluminum, learning not to waste natural resources. Teach that all are called to give of their time, talents, and earthly goods.
- Present Jesus as a model and friend. Identify biblical personalities, saints, and people in our own day who are living as Jesus did and who also serve as role models.
- Explore more fully doctrines of the creed, commandments, and sacraments. Emphasize the meaning behind law and ritual. Provide explanations that represent the effectiveness of Christ at work in the world today.
- Provide opportunities for fourth graders to seek and enjoy short periods of time when they can be alone. Support and nurture this desire and lead the children to prayer by teaching them how to pray and by praying with them: i.e. communal prayer, rote prayers, silent or centering prayer, spontaneous prayer and petitions, meditative prayer, paraliturgies, and prayer services.

Physical Development

Children at this age:

- Show an improvement in athletic skills; have greater control.
- Experience a plateau of sorts in physical development.
- Begin to notice differences between boys and girls.

Social and Emotional Development

Children at this age:

- Become group age "joiners," enjoy team effort.
- Are full of enthusiasm; have a great sense of humor.
- Place more importance on conformity rather than individuality; need to belong to the "right" crowd; begin to be influenced by the teen culture.
- May experience an increased status with peers and a decrease in dependence on adults (grow beyond the influence of family and friends; however, still need adults for "direction" and approval).
- Work cooperatively and evaluate selves in relationship to peers; desire to choose their own play/work partners; like to work on group projects; are self-confident.
- Begin to be aware of the opposite sex (display giggling over uncertainty of how to handle these feelings).
- Boys join groups of boys and do not expect or experience difficulties.
- Girls are much more tentative with other girls; exercise a definite ritual of assimilation into the group (catechists need to pay attention to those who do not fit in and encourage acceptance).
- Are conscious of the world around them.

Cognitive Development

Children at this age:

- Enjoy intellectual challenges and are beginning to be able to think abstractly
- have a longer attention span and are capable of hard work
- are developing a sense of time
- see the concrete, real world as more important than the imaginative world
- are curious and thirst for knowledge and stimulation
- like to collect and classify things and exercise ability to question and experiment
- grow in reasoning ability and are more able to make moral decisions

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"> ○ Appreciates faith as a free gift of God ○ Recognizes the freedom to choose to act responsibly ○ Understands the Creed as a statement of beliefs ○ Articulates how all of creation is a gift from the Creator ○ Appreciates the forgiveness of sins through the power of the Holy Spirit ○ Recognizes the Truth of God's love <p>Tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describes Jesus as a model for living ○ Understands the Church as the Body of Christ ○ Demonstrates responsibility as stewards of creation 	<p>Participates regularly in Sunday worship</p> <p>Sacraments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understands that Eucharist is the source and summit of participation in life in Christ ○ Appreciates the need to continually return to Eucharist for renewal in Christ to live Christ <p>Liturgical Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appreciates entering more deeply into the paschal mystery through participation in the liturgical year of the Church <p>Gestures/Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performs a simple and profound bow 	<p>A Disciple of Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizes the immortality of the soul and the responsibility to live in right relationship with God and with one another ○ Pursues a greater understanding and naming of the Ten Commandments as rules to live God's life of love ○ Appreciates the Beatitudes as a way of life modeled by Christ ○ Responds to the needs of others by living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy ○ Recognizes evil as the absence of good
Scripture		
<p>Genesis 1: 27-31 – Creation of Man and Woman</p> <p>John 20: 19-23 – Forgiveness of Sins</p>	<p>Exodus 12: 1-36 – Passover Story</p> <p>John 18: 1-20 – Paschal Mystery</p>	<p>Exodus 20: 2-17 – Ten Commandments</p> <p>Matthew 5: 1-12 – Sermon on the Mount</p> <p>Matthew 25: 31-46 – Corporal/Spiritual Works of Mercy</p>
Vocabulary		
<p>Belief</p> <p>Creed</p> <p>Steward</p> <p>Truth</p>	<p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Liturgical cycles</p> <p>Paschal mystery</p>	<p>Covenant</p> <p>Evil</p> <p>Hell</p> <p>Idol</p> <p>Immortality</p>
	<p>Remembrance</p> <p>Triduum</p>	<p>Purgatory</p> <p>Reverence</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Satan</p>

Teaching to Pray	Education for Community Life	Missionary Initiation
<p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inspires reverence and awe ○ Prays to Mary as Intercessor through a decade of the Rosary <p>Memorized Prayer/Precepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understands the format of the Rosary <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hail, Holy Queen <p>Liturgical Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies elements of the Liturgy of the Word 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describes Jesus as a model of faith ○ Learns to live the commandments <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Names the four evangelists <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Realizes the need to make good choices ○ Recognizes as models for living: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beatitudes 2. Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy ○ Appreciates the process of canonization 	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acts responsibly to reach out in service to the parish community ○ Realizes the mission of the church as evangelization <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies acts of service in Gospels and reflect on the call to live like Jesus ○ Understands acts of service as stewardship in light of the baptismal call <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies needs of local church and choose a way to be of service
Scripture		
	<p>Matthew 5: 1-11 – Beatitudes Mark 12: 28-34 – The Greatest Commandment Exodus 20: 2-17 – Ten Commandments</p>	<p>Matthew 18: 16-20 – Commissioning of Apostles Matthew 9: 1-15 – Healing of a Paralytic John 5: 1-9 – Healing at Pool of Bethesda Luke 16: 19-31 – Parable of the Rich Man Matthew 14: 13-21 – Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes Luke 5: 17-26 – Healing through the Roof</p>
Vocabulary		
<p>Decade Rosary</p>	<p>Beatitudes Canonization Corporal Works of Mercy Evangelists Gospel Spiritual Works of Mercy Ten Commandments</p>	<p>Evangelization Stewardship</p>

Catechetical Curriculum

Grade 4 Key Concepts

Liturgical Year

ORDINARY TIME (Fall and January)

- K Understands Creed as a statement of beliefs
- K Articulates how all of creation is a gift from the Creator
Gn 1: 27-31- Creation of Man and Woman
- P Understands the format of the Rosary
- P Memorize the Hail Holy Queen
- CL Recognizes as models for living: Beatitudes, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- P Identifies elements of the Liturgy of the Word
- K Describes Jesus as a model of faith and for living
- K Understands the Church as the Body of Christ
- ME Pursues a greater understanding of the Ten Commandments as rules to live God's life of love Ex 20: 2-17- Ten Commandments
- ME Appreciates the Beatitudes as a way of life modeled by Christ- Matt5: 1-11- Beatitudes
- MI Identifies acts of service in Gospels and reflect on the call to live like Jesus Lk 16: 19-31- Parable of Rich Man
- MI Understands acts of service as stewardship in light of the baptismal call Mt 25: 31-46- Corporal/Spiritual Works of Mercy

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- CL Names the four evangelists
- P Prays to Mary as Intercessor through the Rosary-
- CL Appreciates the process of canonization

ADVENT

- K Incarnation Jn 18: 1-20:10- Paschal Mystery
- LE Appreciates entering more deeply into the paschal mystery through participation in the liturgical year of Church

CHRISTMAS

- K Recognizes the truth of God's love

LENT

- MI Acts responsibly to reach out in service to the parish community
- ME Responds to the needs of others by living the corporal and spiritual works of mercy Mt 5: 1-12- Sermon on the Mount
- MI Identifies needs of local church and choose a way to be of service
- ME Recognizes the immortality of the soul and responsibility to live in right relationship w/ God and w/ one another Mt 9: 1-15- Healing of Paralytic
Jn 5: 1-9- Healing at Pool of Bethesda
Lk 5: 17-26- Healing through the roof

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EASTER (April – May)

- MI Realizes the mission of the church as evangelization Matt. 18: 16-20- Commissioning of Apostles
- K Appreciates the forgiveness of sins through the power of the Holy Spirit Forgiveness of Sins Jn 20: 19-23-

ALL THE TIME

- K Appreciates faith as a free gift of God-
- K Recognizes the freedom to choose to act responsibly
- LE Understands that Eucharist is the source and summit of participation in the life of Christ-
- LE Appreciates the need to continually return to Eucharist for renewal in Christ
- CL Realizes the need to make good choices
- ME Recognizes evil as the absence of good
- K Demonstrates responsibility as stewards of creation
- CL Learns to live the commandments

Legend:

K = Knowledge of Faith

LE = Liturgical Education

ME = Moral Education

P = Teaching to Pray

CL = Education for Community Life

MI = Missionary Life