



## GRADE > 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.

Junior High is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially your child is "crossing the bridge" between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one's unique pattern of development. However, there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

### Your Child's Faith Development

Seventh graders desire to be actively involved in and are open to service opportunities. They are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God. They look to the Church for the content and expression of faith. As a parent you will want to provide opportunities for "service," "community building," "reflection," and "activity." Seventh graders need both faith structure and flexibility in their religion classes and at home. These young people present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: you, as parents, as well as, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. They have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these young adolescents must be attentive to their special circumstances, needs, and attitudes.

Adolescents:

- ✚ Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image
- ✚ Begin abstract thinking
- ✚ Use a more complex decision making process
- ✚ Can reason based on possibilities not just on experiences
- ✚ Can be self-conscious and critical
- ✚ Want to belong
- ✚ Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers
- ✚ Seek limited independence
- ✚ Value friendships based on trust and loyalty
- ✚ Reason at conventional levels
- ✚ Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws, parents, etc.

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](mailto:Cf@richmonddiocese.org).

### *How You Can Help Your Child Grow In Faith*

This year your child will continue to view the Catholic Church as a faith community given life by the Holy Spirit. He/she will come to realize that it is Christ's presence in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit which gives glory and praise to the Father and brings His redeeming love to all. As Catholics, we claim Jesus as the source of all teaching, sacramental life, our mission, and our ministries. As people of God we continue the mission of Jesus through active and committed participation in the life of the Church. Sacraments are specific faith actions of the Church empowered by Jesus through the guidance of the Spirit.

Your child will come to learn that building a strong and realistic concept of him/herself is based on Jesus' vision of being fully human. As God's children, created in His image and likeness, we are called to holiness and eternal life in God's Kingdom. Developing relationships with peers, parents, and other adults should be based on honest, love, and respect, leading us into a deeper life and faith and a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

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 mentioned in the homily. Once a month, allow your eight grader to select an activity that the family can enjoy after Mass (i.e. dining at a favorite restaurant, attending a special movie, sports activity etc).
- ➔ Help your child identify ways to participate in your parish. Stress the importance of service to others by volunteering our time and talents. Mention the importance of tithing.
- ➔ Encourage your child (and his/her friends) to become involved in your parish Middle School Ministry Program or Youth Ministry Program. If your parish does not have a program, check with the Office of Youth Ministry. <http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ym/index.htm>
- ➔ 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, local nursing home).
- ➔ Purchase a teen's Catholic bible as a gift for your child. Encourage him/her to pray often.

Grade >

# 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 Seventh Graders?*

JUNIOR HIGH – Seventh and eighth grade is a time of rapid change. Physically, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and socially these young people are “crossing the bridge” between childhood and adulthood. It may be a longer journey for some than others because of each one’s unique pattern of development. However there are some general developmental comments about this stage that can be made.

## DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Junior High Students:

Physical

- Undergo a growth spurt.
- Develop secondary sex characteristics.
- Are sensitive to physical changes and body image which greatly influences self-image.

Cognitive

- Begin abstract thinking.
- Use a more complex decision making process.
- Can reason based on possibilities not just experience.
- Can be self-conscious and critical.

Identity

- Want to belong.
- Begin to distance themselves at times from family influences and identify more closely with peers.
- Seek limited independence.
- Value friendship based on trust and loyalty.

Moral

- Reason at conventional level.
- Resolve moral dilemmas based on expectations outside of self, i.e. peers, laws, parents, etc.

Faith

- Desire active involvement and are open to service opportunities.
- Are willing to explore a personal relationship with God as they begin to define their own image of God.
- Look to the Church for the content and expression of faith.

Realizing all these factors, a junior high religion program should be one that still involves the concrete, but also provides opportunities for “community building,” “reflection,” and “activity.”

These young teens are truly in a transition time. They need both faith structure and flexibility in a religion program.

Junior high school students, who can range in age from 11-15, present particular challenges and opportunities to those who minister to them: parents, those responsible for religious education in parishes, youth workers, and clergy. These young people have needs and wants that are unique to their situations and their levels of maturity in many areas. Adults who work with these younger adolescents must be attentive to the special circumstances, needs, and attitudes of junior high students. Please visit the Youth Ministry page on the Diocesan website for opportunities and contacts

<http://www.richmonddiocese.org/ym/index.htm>

## 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.

Catechetical Curriculum  
Grade 7 Key Concepts

<b>Knowledge of Faith</b>	<b>Liturgical Education</b>	<b>Moral Education</b>
<p><b>Creed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Articulates the hierarchy of truths of the faith: Trinity, Incarnation, Paschal Mystery, Church</li> <li>o Appreciates God as source of all life and truth</li> <li>o Recognizes that Jesus is God the Son Incarnate and Savior</li> <li>o Acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is God's active presence in our lives, both personally and communally</li> </ul> <p><b>Tradition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Understands the Nicene Creed as an extrapolation of the Truths of the Faith</li> </ul>	<p>Participates regularly in Sunday worship</p> <p><b>Sacraments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Embraces the sacraments and centrality of Eucharist for life in Christ</li> <li>o Recognizes and experiences belonging to a parish</li> <li>o Appreciates Catholic rituals including RCIA</li> </ul> <p><b>Liturgical Year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Articulates cycles of liturgical year</li> <li>o Identifies the Holy Days of Obligation</li> </ul> <p><b>Gestures/Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Formulates a Prayer of the Faithful</li> <li>o Experiences the devotion of Benediction</li> <li>o Understands responsibility for abstinence and fasting</li> </ul>	<p>A Disciple of Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Appreciates the foundations of the Christian moral life: Ten Commandments, Law of Love, Beatitudes</li> <li>o Applies the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to daily living</li> <li>o Perceives the role of virtues in developing spiritual lives</li> <li>o Integrates the skills of social justice and peacemaking in life choices</li> <li>o Recognizes the need for continual conscience formation</li> <li>o Understands vice as the opposite of virtue</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>		
Acts 2: 42-47 – Picture of the Early Christian Community	John 3: 16 – Reason for Worship	Romans 8: – Disciples' way of living Acts 6: 1-6 – Need for help Matthew 19: 16-26 – The Rich Young Man Galatians 5: 22-26 – Fruits of the Spirit John 13: 1-6 – Footwashing Philippians 2: 5-11 – Attitude of Christ
<b>Vocabulary</b>		
Abstinence Benediction Body of Christ Easter Vigil Fast	Holy Days of Obligation RCIA Transubstantiation	Fruits of the Spirit Gifts of the Spirit Vice Virtue

Teaching to Pray	Education for Community Life	Missionary Initiation
<p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciates that as individuals uniquely created by God we are called to praise and worship God as one People</li> </ul> <p>Prayers/Precepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psalm 23 – The Lord is my shepherd...</li> <li>Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary</li> </ul> <p>Liturgical Prayer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicene Creed</li> </ul>	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores how faith has been transmitted down through the ages from the time of the apostles</li> <li>Appreciates the Church as the Body of Christ in the world today</li> <li>Acknowledges the church’s teaching on death, judgment, heaven, and hell</li> <li>Identifies ways the community of believers live the four marks of the church</li> </ul> <p>Communion of Saints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deepens an awareness of Mary as a perfect model of faith</li> <li>Identifies the three dimensions of the Communion of Saints: triumphant, suffering, militant and how each relates to the others</li> </ul> <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops an understanding of how faith informs culture and culture relates to faith</li> <li>Appreciates the Hispanic tradition for the celebration of the Feast of All Saints</li> </ul>	<p>Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledges God’s call to holiness empowered by Baptism as articulated in Lumen Gentium</li> <li>Recognizes the gift of celibacy as a means of witnessing to the Kingdom of God</li> </ul> <p>Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates how the Law of Love is actualized through the awareness of the needs of and service to the poor</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>		
<p>Mark 14: 32-42 – The Agony in the Garden John 18: 28-19:1 – The Scourging at the Pillar John 19: 2-12 – The Crowning with Thorns Luke 23: 26-32 – The Carrying of the Cross Mark 15: 22-41 – The Crucifixion of Jesus</p>	<p>Acts 2: 42-47 – The Early Church Community John 10: 1-11 – The Good Shepherd John 15: 1-17 – The Vine and Branches Luke 1: 39-45 – Mary, Model of Service</p>	<p>Luke 10: 29-37 – Good Samaritan John 15: 12 – Law of Love Isaiah 32: 17 – Justice and Peace Psalm 34 – Thanksgiving to God who Delivers the Just Luke 17: 11-19 – Cure of the Leper</p>
<b>Vocabulary</b>		
	<p>Judgment Pentecost</p>	<p>Cathedral Kitchen Catholic Charities Catholic Relief Services Celibacy</p> <p>Food Banks Habitat for Humanity Holiness</p>

# Catechetical Curriculum

## Grade 7 Key Concepts

### Liturgical Year

#### **ORDINARY TIME** (Fall and January)

- KF Understands the Nicene Creed as an extrapolation of the Truths of the Faith
- LE Embraces the sacraments and centrality of Eucharist for life in Christ Jn 3:16 – Reason for Worship
- LE Articulates cycles of liturgical year
- LE Identifies the Holy Days of Obligation
- ME \*Appreciates the foundations of the Christian moral life: Ten Commandments, Law of Love, Beatitudes Jn 15:12 – Law of Love
- CL Explores how faith has been transmitted down through the ages from the time of the apostles
- CL Appreciates the Church as the Body of Christ in the world today Jn 15:1-17 – The Vine and the Branches
- CL Identifies ways the community of believers live the four marks of the church Psalm 23: The Lord is my shepherd Jn 10:1-11 – The Good Shepherd
- MI Acknowledges God’s call to holiness empowered by Baptism as articulated in Lumen Gentium Psalm 34 – Thanksgiving to God
- MI Recognizes the gift of celibacy as a means of witnessing to the Kingdom of God
- MI \*Demonstrates how the Law of Love is actualized through the awareness of the needs of and service to the poor Luke 10:29-37 – Good Samaritan Isaiah 32:17 – Justice and Peace Luke 17:11-19 – Cure of the Leper

#### **OCTOBER / NOVEMBER**

- CL Identifies the three dimensions of the Communion of Saints: triumphant, suffering, militant and how each relates to the others
- CL Appreciates the Hispanic tradition for the celebration of the Feast of All Saints

#### **ADVENT**

- KF Incarnation
- KF Recognizes that Jesus is God the Son Incarnate and Savior

#### **CHRISTMAS**

- CL Deepens an awareness of Mary as a perfect model of faith Luke 1:39-45 – Mary, Model of Service

#### **LENT**

- KF Paschal Mystery Mark 14:32-42 – The Agony in the Garden Jn 18:28-19:1 – The Scourging at the Pillar Jn 19:2-12 – The Crowning with Thorns Luke 23:26- 32 – The Carrying of the Cross Mark 15:22-41 – The Crucifixion of Jesus

- LE Understands responsibility for abstinence and fasting
- LE Experiences the devotion of Benediction
- ME Integrates the skills of social justice and peacemaking in life choices
- P Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
- MI Demonstrates how the Law of Love is actualized through the awareness of the needs of and service to the poor Jn 13:1-6 – Footwashing Phil 2:5-11 – Attitude of Christ

#### **EASTER (April – May)**

- KF Paschal Mystery
- KF Trinity
- KF Acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is God's active presence in our lives, both personally and communally Acts 2: 42-47 – picture of the early Christian community Rom8 – Disciples' way of living Gal 5:22-26 – Fruits of the Spirit
- CL Acknowledges the church's teaching on death, judgment, heaven, and hell

#### **AT ALL TIMES**

- KF Appreciates God as source of all life and truth
- LE Recognizes and experiences belonging to a parish
- LE Appreciates Catholic rituals including RCIA
- LE Formulates a Prayer of the Faithful
- LE Experiences the devotion of Benediction
- ME Applies the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to daily living Matt19:16-26 – The Rich Young Man Phil 2:5-11 – Attitude of Christ
- ME Perceives the role of virtues in developing spiritual lives
- ME Integrates the skills of social justice and peacemaking in life choices Acts 6:1-6 – Need for help
- ME Appreciates the foundations of the Christian moral life: Ten Commandments, Law of Love, Beatitudes
- ME Recognizes the need for continual conscience formation
- ME Understands vice as the opposite of virtue
- P Appreciates that as individuals uniquely created by God we are called to praise and worship God as one people
- P The Nicene Creed
- CL Develops an understanding of how faith informs culture and culture relates to faith

#### **Legend:**

*K = Knowledge of Faith*

*LE = Liturgical Education*

*ME = Moral Education*

*P = Teaching to Pray*

*CL = Education for Community Life*

*MI = Missionary Life*