

GRADE SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Introduction

Grade Specific Religious Education Curriculum has been described at each grade level, preschool-four year old through grade eight.

The intent of this curriculum is to identify core religious education concepts for each grade level and articulate these in competence-based language. The structure of these one-page summaries is based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *Scripture*. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has four parts: Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. These have occasionally been described as What the Church Believes, What the Church Celebrates, How the Church Lives and How the Church Prays.

Thus the enclosed Grade Level summaries are structured as follows: Creedal Church, Liturgy and Sacrament, Moral Life and Prayer. Scripture is integrated into all four areas of learning (+).

The Creedal Church section refers primarily to doctrines, dogmas and creeds. The Moral Life section describes the moral values contained in the Commandments and Beatitudes- those major codes which guide the lives of Catholic Christians. The Liturgy and Sacrament section refers to the sacraments, liturgical seasons and feasts of the Church Year. The Prayer section describes forms of prayer a child should be familiar with, experience and /or memorize.

The characteristics of a specific grade level intersect the other four categories in order to emphasize the importance of age appropriate learning.

Key points relating to Family Life (*) and Abuse Prevention (***) are integrated into the curriculum.

It is our hope that this Grade Specific Religious Education Curriculum provides concise descriptors that identify what is to be learned and lived as we share the treasure of our faith with our children on the life-long journey of being disciples of Christ.

Philosophy and Goals

Creedal Church

We believe that the doctrine of the Church is articulated in its creeds. These truths we profess as Catholic Christians flow from Scripture and embody a rich Tradition passed down from the first followers of Jesus Christ. The Tradition is God's revelation through time. An understanding of these beliefs provides the foundation of a faith development for children.

Students will:

- Articulate basic beliefs of the Catholic faith.
- Know the history of the Catholic Church.
- Integrate knowledge of the communion of saints through understanding of Mary and the saints.
- Understands that the Church is the community of believers into which they are baptized and called to discipleship.

Liturgy and Sacraments

We believe as Catholic Christians that the Liturgical Year with its seasons and feasts celebrates God's presence in the cycle of human life. As a community of faith we are invited into the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.

Students will:

- Understand and live the communal nature of Church by participating in Sunday Eucharist.
- Participate in the sacraments meaningfully and freely.
- Recognize and celebrate the liturgical seasons and feasts.

Moral Life

We believe we are called to a moral life that embodies Jesus Christ's example of faithfulness, forgiveness, compassion, justice and service.

Students will:

- Make moral choices guided by the Commandments and the Beatitudes.
- Develop a conscience informed by knowledge of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.
- Be grounded in an understanding of Catholic Social Teaching
- Grow in appreciation of the diversity of humankind, recognizing all persons are made in the image and likeness of God.

Prayer

We believe prayer is integral to the Christian life. It sustains and nurtures our relationship with God, enlightens our relationships with others and provides a greater sense of well being.

Students will:

- Express their innermost thoughts and feelings through prayer, both formal and informal.
- Value private and communal prayer.

PRE-SCHOOL (FOUR YEAR OLD) EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Learns that God created the world
- Learns that God made and loves him/her
- Learns that God gave us the gift of his son, Jesus
- Recognizes Jesus was part of a family with Mary and Joseph
- Begins to understand that he/she is part of God's family, which is the Church
 - + Identifies the Bible as a book that has stories about God
 - + Is familiar with the story of creation (Genesis 1-3)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the nativity (Luke 2:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25)
 - + Is familiar with the story of Jesus blessing the children (Luke 18:15-17, Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 19:13-15)
- Learns that the body is a gift from God**

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Knows that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus
- Begins to understand that Advent is time of preparation and waiting for Christmas
- Begins to understand Easter as the celebration of new life
- Begins to understand some Christian symbols (candles, water, fish, cross)
 - + Is familiar with the story of Easter (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, John 13-21)
 - + Is familiar with the story of Christmas (Luke 1-2, Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-23)

Characteristics of a Pre-School (Four-Year-Old) Child

- Sits still for limited amount of time unless highly motivated
- Enjoys manipulative play and projects
- Is a sensory learner
- Is imaginative and creative
- Enjoys stories, rhyming and nonsense songs and poems
- Can be aggressive and explosive due to emotional immaturity
- Likes to make choices and begins to see the wisdom of rules
- Is developing sensitivity to the feelings and attitudes of adults
- Needs experiences where he/she feels respected, is given freedom and can succeed
- Needs to be affirmed when he/she shows kindness and friendliness
- Benefits from opportunities to practice thoughtfulness
- Lacks understanding of cause and effect relationships and intentional or unintentional actions
- Sees predominantly from his/her own point of view and developmentally is still very self-centered
- Needs encouragement to share possessions with others but does not want to be forced
- Enjoys celebrations and being part of a group
- Is capable of beginning to understand God's love by experiencing human love
- Benefits from experiences that can raise awareness and appreciation of God's creation
- Can use signs and symbols as a basis for liturgical awareness
- Needs to have demonstrated to him/her that God made each child unique and special
- Knows that prayer can be talking to God in his/her own words

Moral Life

- Gives examples of ways to show love by helping others
- Recognizes the need to care for God's creation
- Learns the importance of sharing with others
- Learns that Jesus taught us to love one another
- Begins to understand the importance of saying "I'm sorry"
- Identifies certain body parts as "private and special"***

Christian Prayer

- Understands prayer as talking to God
- Understands that it is appropriate to thank God for creation
- Knows how to make the Sign of the Cross
- Is familiar with different types of prayer (thanks, asking, silence, praise)
- Understands singing can be prayer
- Is familiar with the Advent wreath
- Uses varied hand positions in prayer

KINDERGARTEN (FIVE YEAR OLD) EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Learns that God made and loves him/her
- Learns that God created the world out of love
- Knows that God gives us our senses to discover and enjoy creation
- Learns that God's special gift to us is his son, Jesus
- Learns that Jesus showed us how to love one another
- Identifies Mary as the Mother of Jesus
- Recognizes Mary, Joseph and Jesus as the Holy Family
- Learns that the Church is God's family
- Learns that saints are people who have died and are now happy with God
 - + Identifies the Bible as a special book that tells about God's love
 - + Is familiar with the story of creation (Genesis 1-3)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25)
 - + Is familiar with the story of Jesus blessing the children (Luke 18:15-17, Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 19:13-15)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21)
- Recognizes that there are different kinds of families*
- Recognizes one's own family as special*
- Recognizes and cares for the body as a gift from God**

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Begins to participate in prayer experiences and/or liturgies
- Learns about several saints
- Learns that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for Christmas
- Knows that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus
- Learns about Lent as a special time to love one another
- Learns that Easter is a celebration of Jesus' new life
- Recognizes Christian symbols (water, candles, cross, fish, oil and chi-rho)
- Learns that through Baptism we become children of God
- Learns about Jesus' Last Supper (as foundation for later learning about the Eucharist)
- Begins to say, "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you"
 - + Is familiar with the story of Easter (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, John 13-21)

Characteristics of a Kindergarten Child

- Learns through active involvement
- Learns through repetition and review
- Is curious and eager to learn
- Begins to distinguish fantasy from reality
- Listens and follows two and three step directions
- Is able to remain focused on tasks (15 minutes)
- Thinks literally
- Needs to feel that God made each child unique and special
- Needs to feel loved and accepted by others
- Needs individual attention and praise for accomplishments
- Desires to feel independent but needs support and guidance
- Begins to show concern for others
- Learns to show concern for others through role-playing and adult models
- Prefers social play
- Learns to cooperate in a group
- Needs reassurance of God's love through trust relationships with caring adults
- Needs a sense of belonging in the family, class and church
- Has a sense of wonder about God's creation
- Shows thankfulness for God's creation
- Is ready for exposure to Scripture and a variety of prayer experiences

- + Is familiar with the story of Christmas (Luke 1-2, Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-23)
- + Is familiar with the story of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-29)
- + Is familiar with the reference to Eucharist (John 6:35)

Moral Life

- Expresses thankfulness for God's love
- Learns that doing good is acting like Jesus
- Learns ways to help and respect others
- Shows respect for people of all cultures, languages, races and abilities
- Learns ways to share with others
- Reaches out to others through service experiences
- Values and cares for God's creation
- Learns that, while on earth, saints loved God and showed concern for others
- Begins to say "I'm sorry"
 - + Is familiar with the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the Golden Rule (Luke 6:31)
 - + Is familiar with the story of the Loaves and Fishes (John 6:1-15, Luke 9:12-17, Mark 6:34-44, Matthew 14:13-21)
- Shows love and respect for family members*
- Knows the need to talk with someone about feelings*
- Identifies "private and special" body parts and touches which can make a person feel uncomfortable**

Christian Prayer

- Experiences prayer as talking to God
- Participates in different kinds of prayer—praise, thanksgiving and asking
- Understands that silence is a form of prayer
- Understands that music is another form of prayer
- Experiences listening as prayer
- Uses varied hand positions for prayer
- Prays the Sign of the Cross with appropriate gestures
- Prays before eating
- Begins to participate in spontaneous prayer
- Begins to learn "The Lord's Prayer"
 - + Is familiar with the Lord's Prayer as part of Scripture (Luke 11:2-4, Matthew 6:9-13)

GRADE LEVEL 1 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Names God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Recognizes that God creates people and the world out of love
- Begins to recognize that God sent us Jesus to show us how to love God
- Learns to identify Church as God's family
- Begins to recognize that the Holy Spirit is with us and helps us to love God
- Recognizes that every person has a guardian angel and angels are messengers of God
- Recognizes Mary as Jesus' mother and our mother
- Learns about saints
- Learns that we are saved as members of God's family
- Recognizes that God wants us to be happy with him in heaven
 - + Knows the Bible is the story of God's people
 - + Learns about Jesus from the Bible
 - + Is familiar with the story of Christmas (Luke 2: 8-18)
 - + Is familiar with the story of Easter (John 20:1-20, Luke 24:13-35)
- Recognizes that God made all kinds of families*
- Recognizes and cares for the body as a gift from God*

Liturgy/Sacrament

- Recognizes sacraments as special signs of God's love
- Recognizes that Baptism welcomes us to God's family, the Church
- Recognizes that at Mass Eucharist is the Bread of Life and the Saving Cup
- Recognizes that in Reconciliation we say "I'm sorry" and Christ forgives
- Gathers with God's family at Mass to thank and praise God
- Begins to pray at Mass: Lord Have Mercy; Glory to God; Alleluia; Response: "And also with you"; Holy, Holy, Holy; Amen; Our Father; Lamb of God
- Recognizes important liturgical seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and celebrates some saint's feast days
- Recognizes Christian signs and symbols: water, candles, cross, fish, chi-rho, oil
 - + Knows the story of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30, Luke 22:13-20, Mark 14:12-26)
 - + Knows the story of Christmas (Luke 2:8-18)
 - + Knows the story of Easter (John 20:1-20, Luke 24)

Characteristics of a First Grader

- Experiences being special
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to a family
- Appreciates and thanks God for the special gifts of the senses
- Recognizes that friends and family are special
- Helps others and is open to others helping them
- Experiences family rituals and activities
- Experiences forgiveness in daily life
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to the family of God
- Experiences going to church with family weekly
- Shows respect for others
- Begins awareness of social justice issues

Moral Life

- Knows that Jesus gave us two great commandments: To Love God and to love our self and others
- Names how he/she loves God, self and others
- Shows care for others and creation
- Recognizes sin as choosing not to love God, self and others
- Tries to bring peace to one's self and others
- Demonstrates evidence of sharing with others
- Respects God's name as holy
- Recognizes that telling the truth is good and necessary
- Shows respect for people of all races, languages and abilities
- Recognizes saints as people who follow Jesus
 - + Knows the story of creation of the world and us (Genesis 1-3)
 - + Knows the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)
 - + Knows the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
 - + Knows the story of Jesus blessing the children (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke: 18:15-17)
 - + Recognizes stories of Jesus loving and helping many people (Mark 8:22-25, Luke 17:11-19)
- Demonstrates care for family members*
- Knows that feelings can make one feel good or bad*
- Recognizes that the heart of the family is married life *
- Knows that he/she can talk to someone when not feeling safe**
- Identifies "private and special" body parts and touches which can make a person feel uncomfortable**

Christian Prayer

- Prays and adores the Blessed Sacrament
- Recognizes that the church building is a house of prayer
- Experiences prayer as listening and talking to God
- Memorizes the Sign of the Cross
- Prays the Sign of the Cross
- Prays the Lord's Prayer
- Prays the Hail Mary
- Prays the Glory to the Father (Doxology)
- Expresses love of God and personal needs in spontaneous prayer
- Celebrates rituals and devotions such as the advent wreath, the Christmas crib, blessing with holy water
- Uses different gestures/postures for prayer
- Is introduced to traditional prayers and devotions such as the rosary and the Way of the Cross
- Reverences the Bible as God's special book
 - + Knows that the Lord's Prayer is part of Scripture (Luke 11:2-4, Matthew 6:9-13)

GRADE LEVEL 2 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Expresses belief in God as Trinity and can discuss the role of each person in the Trinity
- Tells how the Church is a community of believers in Jesus Christ
- Talks about ways the Church tries to do the things Jesus did
- Knows that Baptism is a sacrament of initiation into the Church
- Knows and celebrates one's own Baptism
- Knows that Jesus saves us from our sins because he died for our sins
- Describes Jesus as the Son of God who shows us God's love
- Learns that God raised Jesus from the dead
- Knows that Mary is the Mother of God and our mother
- Retells the stories of lives of saints
- Learns about the saints, heroes and heroines of the Church
 - + Knows that God speaks to us through the Bible, especially in the Liturgy of the Word
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Nativity (Luke 2:1-18)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of love of God and others (Matthew 22:37,39)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates the meaning of the call of the first disciples (Matthew 4:18-22)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way that we are called by God (Isaiah 43:1)
- Knows that God made all things for us to enjoy*
- Recognizes that God made all kinds of families*

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Recognizes the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist
- Recognizes the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- Wants to receive First Communion
- Celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation as healing forgiveness
- Knows importance of gathering regularly with God's family at Mass to worship and ask God's blessings
- Recognizes Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of Eucharist as parts of the Mass
- Experiences liturgical rituals and gestures (for example bow, genuflect) as a way of sharing in Jesus' life
- Knows that God forgives sins in Baptism, Eucharist and Penance
- Recognizes the items found in a Church worship space
- Knows the requirements for receiving Communion: being free from serious sin and fasting one hour prior to receiving communion
- Recognizes Jesus' healing presence in the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Sick
- Recognizes the Sacraments of Service as Holy Orders and Matrimony
- Recognizes and celebrates the liturgical seasons such as Advent and Lent
- Recognizes Christian signs and symbols and their importance in Liturgy and Sacraments
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of Christmas (Luke 1-2, Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-15)

Characteristics of a Second Grader

- Appreciates family members and recognizes one's uniqueness within the family
- Likes to participate and takes responsibility for his/her own actions as a member of a community (school, teams, groups)
- Experiences family activities and rituals
- Knows that he/she is special
- Experiences forgiveness in daily life
- Recognizes that he/she belongs to the family of God
- Experiences going to church weekly with the family
- Helps others and is open to being helped
- Can focus for longer periods of time
- Like to help with some routine chores
- Enjoys family outings

- + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-29, John 17:1-26, Luke 22:7-20)
- + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:33-37)
- + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of Easter (John 20:1-20, Luke 24:13-35)

Moral Life

- Acts as Jesus would act by being loving, kind, forgiving and helpful at home, school, church and in the community and can give examples of these
- Describes sin as making deliberate choices not to love God, self or others and recognizes our free choice to do good or bad things
- Explains consequences for making wrong choices
- Acts as a peacemaker
- Recognizes that sin harms or breaks our friendship with God
- Recognizes that the moral law to do good and avoid evil is written in our consciences
- Is able to examine his/her conscience in preparation for Sacrament of Penance
- Knows that love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor
- Begins to recognize the implications for living out the commandments
- Shows care for others and creation
- Recognizes saints as people who follow Jesus and act accordingly
- Recognizes the need for outreach and service within the community
- Shows respect for people of all races, languages and abilities
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Loaves and Fishes (John 6:1-13)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of Washing of the Feet (John 13:1-17)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)
- Demonstrates love for family members*
- Recognizes that all families have rules and that rules keep people safe*
- Recognizes that all families have happy and sad times*
- Knows that he/she can talk to someone when not feeling safe**
- Identifies "private and special" body parts and touches which can make a person feel uncomfortable**

Christian Prayer

- Prays the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory To the Father (Doxology), Nicene Creed, Act of Contrition and prayers before and after meals
- Has memorized the Sign of the Cross and the Our Father
- Prays on a daily basis, expressing child-like trust in God
- Celebrates rituals, devotions and activities, e.g., the Advent calendar, Easter symbols
- Learns the importance of praying as a family
- Knows that prayer is raising one's mind and heart to God
- Prays with the help of the Holy Spirit
- Prays using the different gestures and postures of prayer
 - + Reverences the Bible as God's special book and can find the gospel stories in the Bible
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:9-13)
 - + Is familiar with and articulates in a simple way the meaning of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus and some miracle stories
 - + Can tell how the Bible stories demonstrate God's love

GRADE LEVEL 3 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Describes God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Savior, God the Holy Spirit as Helper and Advocate
- Describes Jesus' mission as proclaiming the Good News and bringing about the Kingdom of God
- Defines the words "creed" and "communion of saints"
- Identifies the pope and bishops as leaders of the Catholic Church
- Knows that we become members of the Church through Baptism
- Tells the stories of five saints and describes the qualities of saints
- Understands Mary as the Mother of Jesus, as our mother and the Church's model of faith and charity
- Names Jesus' twelve apostles
- Knows the difference between the Old and New Testament
- Understands in a simple way the Paschal Mystery and that Jesus died to save us from our sins
- Understands in a simple way that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit
- Knows the meaning of Ascension and that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead
- Recognizes that death will lead to union with God (heaven) or separation from God (hell)
- Knows that God created us to think, wonder and choose*
- Knows that we are created in the image and likeness of God*
- Understands that mothers and fathers share with God in creating new life*

Characteristics of a Third Grader

- Shows a high level of energy and willingness to tackle almost anything
- Tends to be less cautious than younger children
- Begins to act more responsibly
- Begins to judge situations and considers what can happen to him/her
- Deepens understanding of forgiveness and healing
- Develops ability to feel empathy and compassion
- Displays enormous curiosity
- Shows increased self-confidence
- Develops close friendships
- Looks forward to school for social and academic reasons
- Wants to belong to a group
- Likes to read and write for pleasure and entertainment
- Needs supportive reinforcement from parents and other adults
- Experiences family rituals and activities
- Acquires computer skills and a developing understanding of technology
- Enjoys video games and other electronic entertainment

Moral Life

- Names the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Knows that the Eucharist brings forgiveness and calls us to service
- Tells the difference between temptation, accident and sin
- Describes how sin hurts the whole community
- Shows evidence of living as a virtuous disciple
- Describes what it means to be a peacemaker
- Shows evidence of acting as a peacemaker
- Gives examples of how to work for justice and peace
- Practices stewardship in parish, community and world
- Recognizes that the Gospel is the revelation of Christ's mercy
- Knows that when we confess our sins, God forgives us
- Describes receiving grace which helps restore what sin has damaged in us
- Learns how to respond to conflicts in a peaceful way
- Displays skills of conflict resolution
- Identifies ways to prevent prejudice and discrimination
- Articulates basic human rights and responsibilities
- Knows and lives the Two Great Commandments
- Articulates a simple meaning of each of the Ten Commandments and gives examples of how to follow them
 - + Retells the story of Jesus Welcoming the Children (Mark 10:13-16)
 - + Can give an example of a parable from Scripture
 - + Retells the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24)
 - + Can give an example of a miracle story from Scripture
 - + Retells the story of the Loaves and Fishes (John 6:1-14)
- Knows that God calls us to care for all creation*
- Identifies people who can help in making good decisions*
- Understands the value of friendships between brothers and sisters*
- Knows that he/she can talk to someone when not feeling safe**
- Identifies "private and special" body parts and touches which can make a person feel uncomfortable**

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Names and describes the seven sacraments as signs of the Holy Spirit's work in us
- Explains the primary symbols of each of the seven sacraments
- Experiences Reconciliation as healing and forgiveness
- Recognizes essential importance of regular, active participation at Sunday Eucharist
- Knows the difference between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Describes items found in a church worship space
- Explains the seasons of the Liturgical Year
 - Exhibits a thorough understanding of the Easter Season
 - Celebrates the Holy Days
 - Experiences activities related to the Liturgical Seasons and Feasts
 - Knows the significance of God as Abba, as addressed by Jesus
 - Tells the stories of Jesus' birth, passion, death and resurrection
 - + Tells the Emmaus Story (Luke 24:13-35)
 - + Tells the story of Pentecost (Acts 1:1-4)

Christian Prayer

- Celebrates rituals and devotions
- Prays daily and knows that prayer is vital to Christian life
 - Prays prayers of praise, thankfulness, contrition, petition
 - Prays blessing prayers
 - Prays the Psalms
 - Prays the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, The Apostles' Creed, Act of Contrition, and the Rosary
 - Memorizes the Hail Mary
 - Knows that we pray with the help of the Holy Spirit
 - Experiences that God's creation can help us to pray

GRADE LEVEL 4 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Believes in the goodness of creation and God's care for it
- Understands grace as a sharing in God's life
- Appreciates the Holy Spirit as helper and guide in making good choices
- Understands Church as a community of worship, witness and service which carries on the work and mission of Christ
- Understands that God communicates gradually to us
- Understands that our faith is Trinitarian as expressed in Baptism
- Understands that the story of Adam and Eve reminds us that our first parents sinned against God
- Understands that Jesus lived, suffered and died for us, and we will rise with Christ to new life after death
- Knows in everything Jesus did, he is our model
- Knows that the Trinity was fully revealed to Jesus' disciples at Pentecost
 - + Understands that Scripture is God's word to us
 - + Understands and responds to the following Scriptural passages as experiences of God's love for us, our love for humanity and our need for mercy and forgiveness: Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17); Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12); Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24); Temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11)
- + Knows the meaning of the covenant with Noah, Abraham and Moses (Genesis 9:1-3, Genesis 17:1-9, Exodus 19:1-8)
- + Demonstrates the ability to locate the passages listed above in the Bible
- Knows that life begins at conception and grows inside the mother's body*
- Knows that God created human beings with a body and soul*

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Articulates the meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation
- Celebrates the Eucharist as a sacrament of the Church's unity, reconciliation and peace
- Celebrates Reconciliation as a sacrament of conversion, God's forgiveness, mercy and love
- Recognizes the value of and knows how to examine one's conscience
- Knows how to celebrate Rite I and II of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and can articulate the communal dimension of sin and forgiveness
- Expresses sorrow for sins in a prayer of contrition
- Knows the essential importance of regular participation in Sunday Eucharist, knowing that it is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery
- Explains ways Christ is present at Mass
- Has a growing understanding of the liturgical year

Characteristics of a Fourth Grader

- Demonstrates an interest in the wider world
- Grows in awareness of justice and fair play
- Exhibits awareness of self as individual and as a member of a group
- Recognizes need for guidelines and rules
- Acts more independently and confidently
- Begins to think of larger issues, e.g., environment, prejudice, violence, etc.
- Enjoys reading, listening to and participating in stories as well as role playing
- Develops friendships with members of the same sex
- Learns from observations as well as direct teaching
- Is able to use technology to obtain information and to communicate with others
- Displays curiosity about life, nature and people
- Desires to share and do things with others
- Develops an awareness that life requires making choices
- Is significantly influenced by teens and pre-teens in popular culture (music, television, movies)

Moral Life

- Recognizes that all Christians are called to holiness
- Knows Jesus' Two Great Commandments of love are a Christian's way of life
- Can articulate the Ten Commandments using the traditional formula
- Sees the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as ways of responding to the needs of others
- Realizes that original sin is the human condition into which we are all born
- Recognizes conscience as the inner ability to judge between good and bad when making choices and recognizes the seven capital sins
- Realizes that temptation is a pull toward something we know is sinful and that it is a part of everyone's life
- Recognizes the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - + Responds to the Ten Commandments as rules to help us live God's life of love (Exodus 20:2-17)
 - + Learns the Beatitudes as a way of life modeled by Christ to bring happiness (Matthew 5:1-12)
 - + Differentiates between sin which is choosing to turn away from God and mistakes which are accidents (Temptations of Christ - Matthew 4:1-11)
 - + Realizes that all choices have responsibilities and consequences and are to be made in light of Gospel values (Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37)
- Knows that listening to feelings can help one decide how to act*
- Knows that he/she can talk to someone when not feeling safe**
- Identifies "private and special" body parts and touches which can make a person feel uncomfortable**
- Can define bullying and harassment and recognize it when it occurs**

Christian Prayer

- Understands prayer as the living relationship of the children of God with their Father, his Son and the Holy Spirit
- Prays and understands the Prayer of St. Francis as a model for peace and love in the world
- Prays the Our Father
- Understands the Nicene and Apostles Creeds as statements of Catholic beliefs
- Reviews the memorization of previous prayers
- Memorizes the Glory to the Father (Doxology) and the Apostles Creed
- Recognizes forms of popular piety such as the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross
- Experiences personal and communal prayer, especially prayers of praise and thanksgiving

GRADE LEVEL 5 EXPECTATIONS

Credal Church

- Explains how environment is God's creation and ours to respect
- Knows that God is the Creator, all-powerful, who made the world good
- Knows that the human race has a common origin reflected in the Adam and Eve story
- Knows and expresses belief that Jesus is the Son of God and the Word Made Flesh
- Understands Jesus as Savior and that "Jesus" means "God Saves"
- Understands that "Kingdom/Reign of God" is reflected in the good that happens in the world
- Knows and applies the concept of sacramentality: that Christ's life-death-resurrection is celebrated at liturgy
- Identifies ways that the Church carries on the mission of Jesus under the leadership of popes and the bishops
- Explains the communion of saints
- Identifies past and present Christian role models, e.g., patron saints
- Knows that Mary is the Mother of God as she is the mother of Jesus the Christ
- Understands that Christ's death and resurrection were part of God's plan
- Knows that the Assumption celebrates Mary taken to heaven, body and soul
- Knows that after death comes judgment which leads to heaven, hell or purgatory
 - + Knows an overview of the Bible, understanding that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament
 - + Is able to locate and read from the Bible the stories for this age group as listed, e.g., Genesis, chapters 1-3, two versions of the creation story
 - + Understands that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
 - + Knows that the Holy Spirit works in the Church, in the Scriptures and in the lives of people as at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 17)
- Knows about human sexual development and its sacredness*
- Knows and lives the belief that all life is sacred*

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Knows the names, meanings, signs and symbols of each of the seven sacraments
- Celebrates the sacrament of Reconciliation
- Participates in the preparation of Eucharistic liturgies with class or group
- Recognizes the liturgical calendar and can explain the seasons of the Church year, their meanings and color
- Knows that the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ
- Understands the Sacrament of Holy Orders as the way Christ continues to preach and sanctify
 - + Is able to locate, read from the Bible and understands each story listed below as it relates to the Scriptures
 - + Experiences water, bread, oil and light as sacramental symbols (John 4:4-42)
 - + Recognizes Christ's presence at Mass: in the assembly, the priest-presider, the proclamation of the Word and especially in the Bread and Wine (John 6:1-58)
 - + Recognizes the meaning and celebration of the Sacred Triduum and Easter as our central feast – Anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3-9)
 - + Knows that Baptism forgives original and personal sin – Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)
 - + Knows Confirmation and Baptism relate to the mission of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 3:13-17); and service (Mark 10:44)
 - + Understands that in the Sacrament of Matrimony, the family is seen as the "domestic Church" (John 2:1-11)
- + Understands the healing power of Christ in the Sacrament of the Sick (James 5:14-15)

Characteristics of a 5th Grader

- Transitions into puberty with rapid physical and emotional changes
- Demonstrates marked differences between boys and girls and even among the same gender
- Becomes aware of past, present and future community experiences
- Belongs to one or more groups because of commitments, e.g., sports, fun, service
- Belongs to peer groups who often develop their own codes of behavior
- Begins to make choices independent of adults
- Recognizes signs and symbols in games, sports, clothes and professions
- Appreciates and develops personal talents and abilities
- Practices problem solving
- Begins to be aware of different customs and rituals among people
- Values success in sports and is influenced by sports figures

Moral Life

- Understands that the presence of sin or evil in the world is "original sin" into which we are all born
- Recognizes attitudes and actions that are sinful or selfish
- Acts out of the belief that mercy and justice are essential to Christian living
- Follows Catholic Social Justice teaching by reaching out to others through positive words and actions
- Distinguishes between mortal (serious) and venial sin
- Has a working knowledge of the Beatitudes and Commandments and can apply them to daily life
- Understands the meaning of the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude
 - + Practices forgiveness and being forgiven and knows forgiveness stories in Bible, e.g., (Matthew 18:21-22)
 - + Begins to be aware of the need for on-going conversion (1Corinthians 13:4-8)
- Identifies private and special body parts and touches which can make one feel uncomfortable**
- Can define bullying and harassment and recognizes when it occurs**
- Knows how to use conflict management skills**

Christian Prayer

- Participates in prayer services and other devotions, e.g., rosary, stations of the cross
- Prays the Our Father, Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed
- Knows how to pray the rosary
- Recognizes that Jesus prayed at decisive times in his life
- Prays to the saints in union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Prays in harmony with the seasons of the Church Year
- Understands the difference between the Mass, other communal prayer and private prayer
- Uses Scripture as a source of prayer and reflection

GRADE LEVEL 6 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Understands the basic concepts of the Creed
- Recognizes that God is the creator of all life, and God creates every human being for eternal life
- Understands the creation stories as theologically true stories but not necessarily rooted in history or science
- Recognizes that the Old Testament prophets proclaimed redemption, purification and salvation according to God's plan
- Knows that the Old Testament covenants find their culmination in Christ
- Articulates what the Church means by Trinity
- Is able to relate "Body of Christ" and "People of God" to Church
- Can explain Incarnation, Resurrection, Redemption and connect them to feasts and seasons of the Church Year
- Understands role of Mary and saints as models for holiness
- Recognizes the diversity of ministry in the Church
- Articulates the difference between Scripture and Tradition
 - + Articulates the difference between Old and New Testament
 - + Understands the Bible's role in the Church
 - + Recognizes different literary forms in the Bible: fable, parable, myth, hymn, law, poetry, prophetic writing, narratives, faith history, etc.
 - + Recognizes stories in previous grade levels and can identify their literary forms
- + Knows terms: covenant and genealogy (family faith tree) – Covenant with Abram (Genesis 15)
- + Identifies and can retell the following stories expressing their faith meaning: Joseph (Genesis 37-45); Moses/Exodus/Passover/Commandments (Exodus 2:1-11, 23-24, Exodus 3, Exodus 12, Exodus 20); David (1 Samuel, 2 Samuel)
- + Expresses belief in Jesus as the Messiah, Prophet, Teacher, true God and true Man (Luke 4:16-22, Matthew 5-7)

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Grows continually in understanding of the symbolic actions in the sacraments
- Connects the seven sacraments with life experiences
- Knows that liturgical prayer includes celebrations of the sacraments, Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass
- Participates in Sunday Eucharist, Reconciliation, seasonal rituals of the Church and prayer services
- Recognizes that the Mass always celebrates the Paschal Mystery and sometimes celebrates the solemnities, feasts and memorials of Mary and the saints
- Understands the liturgical year with special emphasis on Lent and the Triduum
- Understands the Eucharist as both a sacrament and a sacrifice
- Knows the difference between a sacrament and a sacramental
- Knows that the purpose of marriage is the good of the spouses, procreation and the education of children*

Characteristics of a 6th Grader

- Experiences an increased level of activity and energy
- Can vary in behavior from alert, imaginative, outgoing and energetic to rebellious, quarrelsome and self-centered
- Likes to "hang out" in groups
- Can become argumentative, emotional and sensitive due to fast pace of growth and hormonal changes
- Develops a fierce loyalty to friends, highly influenced by peer opinion
- Develops increased awareness of the opposite sex but may not have appropriate social skills to express this interest
- Demonstrates an increased sensitivity to criticism, especially in front of peers
- Begins to challenge authority
- Looks for heroes and heroines in popular culture
- Begins to develop a historical sense
- Depends on support and security of family while showing signs of wanting to be independent of family
- Experiences ambivalence about changes in his/her own body

Moral Life

- Knows that, as a Temple of the Holy Spirit, each Christian is called to be a saint
- Relates the Ten Commandments, the Two Great Commandments and the Beatitudes to life experiences
- Shows respect for body, self and others
- Articulates how prejudice and injustice are social sins
- Demonstrates problem solving to effect positive change in school, neighborhood and world
- Appreciates the value of humility and fidelity as lived out in the daily life of a Christian
- Contributes to class outreach projects and recognizes the importance of service in the Christian life
 - + Describes ways in which the prophets and saints are models for one's own life – Prophets as moral leaders (Amos 5:10-12, 21-24, 8:4-6, Isaiah 1:23, 3:12-15, Isaiah 13-15, Micah 6:1-4, 8, Jeremiah 19:3-4)
 - + Accepts consequences for choices made – Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
- Shows respect for other people's feelings and needs*
- Is growing in acceptance and understanding of self as indicated by interactions with others*
- Understands that delayed gratification is a sign of growing in maturity*
- Practices the virtues of charity, honesty, respect and chastity*
- Can define bullying and harassment and recognizes it when it occurs**
- Knows how to use conflict management skills**
- Can define and discuss the meaning of sexual harassment and sexual abuse**

Christian Prayer

- Prays the prayers of the Church previously learned
- Recognizes Abraham as a model of prayer, especially faith
- Prays the psalms as personal and communal prayer
- Meditates by engaging in thought, imagination, emotion and desire
- Prays in adoration, recognizing that we are creatures of God
- Uses parables and relates them to life experiences in prayer
- Prays daily
- Knows that the Canticle of Zachariah in morning prayer and the Magnificat in evening prayer are part of the Liturgy of the Hours

GRADE LEVEL 7 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Recognizes that faith is our response to God who gives Himself to us
- Recognizes Jesus Christ as the greatest of God's gifts to us
- Knows that God revealed Himself gradually in words and actions
- Knows the Church's description of the Trinity as God in three divine persons
- Describes the major traditions of our roots as Catholic Christians, e.g., marks of the Church, Church hierarchy, lay leadership, ecumenism
- Explains how "Catholic" means global, universal
- Knows the role of Mary, the apostles, saints and holy people in our faith traditions
- Identifies one's self as being a unique creation made in God's image
- Recognizes that we are called to cooperate freely with God's plan
- Knows that Mary remained free from sin her whole life from conception to death
- Knows that Christ is the heavenly high priest always interceding for us
- Knows that at the end of time we will rise with our glorified bodies
 - + Uses stories from Scripture that describe the person and ministry of Jesus Christ: Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17); Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Mark 1: 16-20, Matthew 9:9-13); the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 5-7, Matthew 25:31-46, John 3:16, John 13-17); The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-10)
 - + Recognizes major periods in the Bible and in the history of the Catholic Church
 - + Explains the relationship between the Old and New Testament

Characteristics of a 7th Grader

- Experiences great variation in physical, emotional, social and spiritual development
- Is impacted greatly by his/her changing body and newly acquired ability to think abstractly
- Struggles to express autonomy and may have difficulty distinguishing nuances of truth
- Thrives when allowed opportunities to experience the positive aspects of the new gifts of their mind and body
- Is challenged by being encouraged to think and engage in experiences which elicit deep compassion
- Benefits from journaling and meditation as positive sources for his/her introspective tendencies
- Develops most fully when provided experiences that will accommodate the wide variations in maturation
- Demonstrates a need for fairness and justice
- Experiences affirming and positive relationships with persons of both genders
- Continues to develop autonomy within the context of family

Moral Life

- Describes experiences of conscience which signal what is right and wrong; a moral compass which guides us toward the Kingdom of God
- Identifies personal and moral choices as expressions of a Catholic moral life
- Associates social, economic and political choices with Christian morality
- Recognizes that some sins are collective and social-the wrongful acts of a group
- Integrates the skills of justice and peacemaking into actions
- Knows the value and the good acts of sacrifice, penance and self denial as part of Christian discipleship
- Recognizes that the values of our Catholic faith are contrary to the message in some contemporary music and media
 - + Names and describes the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as guidelines for living a happy life and applies them to daily life (Matthew 5:3-12, Matthew 25:31-46, John 13:1-20)
 - + Associates Jesus as a model of how we are to behave toward others (Luke 8:1-3, Luke 10:38-45, Matthew 19:13-15, John 13:12-16, John 13:34-35, John 15:8-10)
 - + Connects Scripture to life issues: Rich Young Man (Matthew 19:16-24)
- Recognizes that God's plan calls us to refrain from sexual activity outside of marriage*
- Recognizes that there are many sinful uses of sexuality in society*
- Knows that substance abuse has many deadly effects on mind and body*
- Practices the virtues of chastity, tolerance, understanding, prudence and self-acceptance*
- Can define bullying and harassment and recognizes it when it occurs**
- Knows how to use conflict management skills**
- Can define and discuss the meaning of sexual harassment and sexual abuse**

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Knows that liturgy is the work of Christ through his Church
- Names the sacraments of the Church and associates them with life experiences, e.g., family meals and Eucharist, forgiveness and Reconciliation, commitment Matrimony/Holy Orders/Confirmation
- Grows in understanding the many facets of the sacramental life of the Church
- Participates regularly in Sunday Eucharist
- Recognizes and understands the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- Participates in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Articulates the cycles of the Liturgical Year, including special feasts
- Identifies the ritual nature of life and associates it with the ritual of the Church, e.g., seasons of nature and the seasons of the Church Year
- Recognizes sacraments as effective signs of grace given by Christ and entrusted to the Church
 - + Identifies sacramental actions in Scripture: Rebirth (John 3:1-18); Commitment (Acts 2:1-13); Ritual Meal (Matthew 26:20-29, Mark 4:17-25, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Mark 6:34-44); Forgiveness (John 20:22-23); Healing (James 5:13-15, Luke 5:17-25); Ministry (Matthew 28:18-20); Marriage (Genesis 2:21-25, Mark 10:6-9)

Christian Prayer

- Experiences a relationship with God in individual prayer, including meditation and spontaneous prayer
 - Recognizes and experiences belonging to a community which prays with and for each other
 - Recognizes that prayer is rooted in hope and is a "surge of the heart" toward God
 - Knows that the Lord's Prayer summarizes the Gospel and prays it often
 - Prays the Jesus Prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner"
 - Grows in the knowledge of God's loving Presence through retreat experiences
 - Knows and prays all prayers memorized through the grade levels such as the Glory to the Father (Doxology), the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Apostles Creed, the Act of Contrition, the Rosary
 - Uses Scripture as a source of prayer
 - Recognizes and uses music as a form of prayer

GRADE LEVEL 8 EXPECTATIONS

Creedal Church

- Recognizes that we know God through creation, our own consciences and our longing for God
- Connects creedal beliefs of the Catholic Church to the lived experience of youth
- Recognizes that there are angels who praise and serve God
- Recognizes major periods in the Bible and in the history of the Catholic Church
- Describes the major traditions of our roots as Catholic Christians, e.g., marks of the church, church hierarchy, lay leadership and ecumenism
- Knows that Christ redeemed us from sin
- Describes the contribution of Mary, saints and holy people to faith tradition
- Knows that faith and science cannot contradict each other as both come from God
- Is able to explain and defend the core beliefs of the Catholic faith (apologetics)
- Recognizes the possibility we will be called to suffer for our faith
- Recognizes holy people of other traditions: Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr.
- Identifies one's self as being a unique creation, made in God's image
- Recognizes that God has truly revealed His plan through Jesus Christ
 - + Knows that to understand the Scriptures, one has to take into account the literary forms of the time
 - + Tells stories from Scripture that describe the person and ministry of Jesus Christ: The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31); The Money Changers in the Temple (Mark 11:15-18); The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:13-17); The Last Judgment (Matthew 25:35-40); Jesus Announces His Mission (Luke 4:14-23); Jesus: The Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:47); The Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)

Liturgy and Sacraments

- Knows that Christ acting in the Church is the ultimate celebrant of every sacrament
- Identifies the symbolic nature of Sacraments with symbols in life
- Identifies and experiences Catholic rituals and rites, for example, blessings, the Sacraments and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
- Participates regularly in Sunday Eucharist and knows that Christ is present in the assembly, Word, presider and especially in the Blessed Bread and Wine
- Participates in the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly
- Articulates the cycles of the Liturgical Year, including special feasts
- Identifies the ritual nature of life and associates it with the ritual of Church, for example, family meals and the Eucharist, seasons of nature and seasons of the Church Year
 - + Identifies sacramental actions in Scripture: Commissioning (Matthew 28:18-20, Jeremiah 1:4-8, John 14:25-26, Acts 2:1-13); Ritual Meals (2 Chronicles 35:16-19, Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 24:13-32, John 6:28-35); Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35, John 20:19-23); Healing (Mark 1:29-34, Luke 5:17-26, James 5:13-15); Marriage (Genesis 2:22-24, Matthew 19:1-6, John 2:1-11); Ministry (Leviticus 8:1-13, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 6:7-13)

Characteristics of an 8th Grader

- Continues to develop autonomy within the context of being in a family structure
- Needs a certain degree of privacy
- Experiences changes during puberty that may cause worry about his/her developing body
- Grows in recognition of his/her uniqueness as he/she experience affirming and positive relationships with persons of both genders
- Experience highs and lows in friendships due to idealism and a "black and white" perception of life
- Uses music, movies, TV and video games as pastimes
- Uses sports, musical instruments and drama as creative outlets for developing talents
- Experiences internet, e-mail and writing on the computer as everyday highlights
- Needs discussion, reflection and prayer to organize the experiences and information gathered in life

Moral Life

- Names and describes the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as guidelines for living a happy life and applies them to daily life
- Describes experiences of conscience which signal what is right and wrong
- Identifies personal moral choices as an expression of a Catholic Christian moral life
- Associates social, economic and political choices with Christian morality
- Recognizes that some sins are collective and social-the wrongful acts of a group
- Integrates the skills of justice and peacemaking into their actions
- Recognizes that the values of our Catholic faith are contrary to the message in some contemporary music and media
- Is conscious of racial, ethnic and class differences and makes definite efforts to be inclusive in relationships, reaching out to those not in the "in group"
- Experiences a variety of opportunities to serve one's neighbors
- Associates Jesus as a friend and model of how we are called to be friends
- Recognizes that responsible dating helps friendships, and must be built on mutual respect*
- Knows that we are called to respect life from conception to death*
- Recognizes that affirmation and communication are essential to human life and are found in strong families*
- Knows that violence begins with a lack of respect for life*
- Knows that peer pressure is a powerful force that sometimes contradicts Christian principles*
- Can define bullying and harassment and recognize it when it occurs**
- Knows how to use conflict management skills**
- Can define and discuss the meaning of sexual harassment and sexual abuse**

Christian Prayer

- Experiences a relationship with God in individual prayer including meditation and spontaneous prayer
- Recognizes and experiences belonging to a community which prays with and for each other
 - Prays and understands the Nicene Creed
 - Prays the Our Father as the most perfect prayer
 - Uses contemplative prayer
 - Prays, blessing God for all He has bestowed
 - Prays using Marian devotions and other devotions, i.e., Stations of the Cross
 - Uses Scripture as a source for daily prayer
 - Experiences the presence of God through prayerful retreat experiences
 - + Connects Scripture stories to life issues through prayer: Life of the Christian (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35); Light under the Bushel Basket (Matthew 5:14-16); God's Mercy and Compassion (Luke 1:68-79); Church as a Family (Ephesians 2:14-21); Justice of God (Jeremiah 22:13, Luke 6:36,38); Kingdom Parable and Actions (Luke 10:33, 19:10, Mark 2:17); Share My Mission (Matthew 28:20)