

DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
DEPARTMENT OF
www.officeoflifelongfaithformation.org

LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

Dear Parents,

You are the first and foremost educators who plant the seeds of faith in your children long before participation in any formal catechetical program. And once in a formal religion program in a Catholic school or parish program, you reinforce and support what is being taught.

You teach powerfully by the way you live and practice your Catholic Christian faith. It is within the family setting more than anywhere else that faith formation takes place. It is here that attitudes toward God, the Church, self and others are first learned. It is in the family that the first steps of prayer, the development of moral conscience and the formation of Christian love which reflects the love of God is taught. The family is the place where Christian education is "...more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more on-going than structured." (GDC255).

Along with parents, the parish is the prime mover and pre-eminent place for formal catechesis. For most Catholics the parish is the single most important aspect of the Church. It is here that they live their faith and experience the support of community. The parish calls members of the community to be catechists to help its families grow in faith (GDC 256).

The *Diocesan Elementary Religion Curriculum* contains the essential content of Catholic religion to be taught at each grade level. This curriculum assists teachers/catechists in the Diocese of Buffalo to present an authentic, clear and relevant presentation of the Catholic faith to students of all grade levels challenging them to grow as persons and believers in today's world. Each grade level includes a list of vocabulary words, prayers, and saints that students at each level should have mastered.

If you are aware of the essential key issues being presented at each grade level, and if you continue the sharing and learning at home year after year, a perfect and ideal Catholic family situation is formed. Enclosed find the *Key Points* of the religion curriculum for each grade level and some helpful suggestions for home use. Please use this example and any other ideas you have with your child yearly. Any suggestions or comments, feel free to e-mail edankowski@buffalodiocese.org or call Elaine Dankowski at 716-847-5516.

Blessings on you and your family.

Elaine

E.D. 12/15/09

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Parent Page –Intermediate Grades

Grade 4: Key points

- the Bible teaches about God’s goodness within ourselves and our world
- all members of the Church are members of the Body of Christ
- the Ten Commandments teach us how to love God and others
- the Holy Spirit and the Church help us to choose what is right
- the Beatitudes teach us to trust God, forgive, and have mercy for others
- the virtues of faith, hope, and love

Grade 5: Key points

- the Psalms are prayers for Jews and Christians found in the Old Testament
- there are four gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- there are 3 Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
- there are 2 Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick
- there are 2 Sacraments of Vocation: Marriage and Holy Orders
- the Rosary is a prayer that reflects Jesus’ and Mary’s lives
- there are ways of working for a more just and fair world

Grade 6: Key points

- there are 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament
- the experience of God’s people is recorded in the Old Testament
- the Old Testament, which contains the roots of our faith, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ

Parent Page for Religion Curriculum: Intermediate Grades

- the covenant relationship with God found in the Old Testament
- the role of the prophets and how to relate to everyday suffering, injustice, and death
- the Eucharistic Liturgy is the community's central act of worship
- the reign of God is justice and peace

Prayers to Know

An Act of Contrition	Hail Holy Queen	Our Father
Apostles' Creed	Hail Mary	Rosary
Doxology (Glory Be...)	Mass Responses	Sign of the Cross

Home Activities:

- Attend Sunday Mass as a family on a weekly basis
- celebrate the Church seasons in your home: have an Advent wreath for Advent, a Nativity set for Christmas, service opportunities throughout the year, prayers and sacrifices in Lent, Easter joy, talk about the saints and their lives as heroes. Often visit: www.religionteachersjournal.com; www.osv.com; www.americancatholic.org; www.usccb.org.
- Periodically watch your child's favorite TV show and discuss the values presented in the light of our Catholic faith tradition.
- As a family, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
- Participate with your child in a parish sponsored service project.
- Identify chores that your child could do that would be a real service to the family.
- With your child visit www.vatican.va and www.pope2you.net to expand his/her realization of a universal Church.
- Purchase Positive Soul Formation, a parent guide to child development, by Dr. Patricia McCormack from Pflaum Publishers www.pflaum.com.
- Order At Home with the Faith from Claretian publications <http://homefaith.wordpress.com/homefaith-resources>.

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