

**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](mailto: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 – Junior High

Grade 7: Key points

- the New Testament teaches us about the person of Jesus and what following Jesus and living the Good News mean
- the teachings of Jesus include teachings on God, prayer, justice and peace, service and moral life
- the Paschal Mystery is Jesus' dying, rising, and sending of the Spirit to live forever with God's people
- Pentecost is a celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples
- Jesus is both God and human
- the Gospel values affirm and challenge our thoughts and actions
- Jesus' life is an example of carrying the cross and living a life of service
- the Beatitudes show us the way to Christian conversion

Grade 8: Key points

- Catholic beliefs are sound and rooted in tradition
- the Catholic Christian faith is a personal response to Jesus and requires a relationship with Jesus
- the Nicene Creed is a composite of Catholic beliefs
- Catholics are called to liturgical ministries
- service is an essential element of discipleship
- the infallibility of the Church in the area of faith and morals.
- develop virtuous habits, pray to discern the vocation to which God is calling them and actively form their conscience correctly.

*This Age has VARIED PRAYER STYLES:*

Participate in a variety of prayer forms guided by Catholic tradition, e.g., meditation, silence and contemplation, guided imagery, Rosary, spontaneous, song, Scripture story.

Prepare and celebrate a youth/parish liturgy.

Celebrate the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday) with the parish community

Participate as members of the Eucharistic liturgical assembly through: signs and symbols of the liturgy, words and actions of the liturgy, and music of the liturgy.

Participate in the liturgical prayers of Eucharistic Adoration, Rite of the Sacraments when celebrated in the parish, devotions of the Stations of the Cross, and novenas to Mary.

Home Activities:

- Attend Sunday Mass weekly as a family.
- Talk with your teen about the values he/she sees reflected in the media and daily surroundings.
- Get to know your teen's friends.
- Take every opportunity to affirm your teen's gifts and talents.
- Encourage your teen to become involved in some Church activity in their parish-youth group, altar server, lector, religious education aide.
- Provide your teen with good resources for their computer like [www.chastity.com](http://www.chastity.com); [www.catholicsoncall.com](http://www.catholicsoncall.com); [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie).
- Participate with your teen in a program sponsored by the parish - food or clothing collection, parish festival, parish mission.
- Encourage your teen to take some private time each day for personal prayer.
- Speak often with your teen about sexting and texting and the wise use of a cell phone.
- As a family, celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
- Demonstrate reverence for the Bible at all times and purchase one for their age level, i.e. *The Catholic Youth Bible* from St. Mary's Press [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org).

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