

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- Primary Grades

Grade 1: Key points

- is aware that the Bible contains God's word
- recognizes God, the Father, in creation
- learns that prayer is listening to and talking to God
- sees why morning, mealtime and night prayers are important
- learns to share with others, respect others, and how we show care and concern for the poor and the suffering

Grade 2: Key points

- Jesus is the Son of God and came to bring us God's Word
- the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and was sent by Jesus to be with us
- the Catholic Church is a family of believers and a community of Jesus' followers
- Jesus died for us on a cross
- Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday to give us new life
- at Mass we gather together as God's family and pray the responses
- we share what we have with others
- the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a gift flowing from Baptism

Grade 3: Key points

- the marks of the Church are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic
- there is a difference between spontaneous prayer and liturgical prayer
- the Apostle's Creed is an important prayer
- there are two parts to the Mass: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist

Parent Page for Religion Curriculum: Primary Grades

- the Eucharist is a sacrament of love and service
- “Whatever we do for people in need, we do for Jesus.”

Prayers to Know

An Act of Contrition	Hail Mary	Our Father
Apostles’ Creed	Mass Responses	Sign of the Cross
Doxology (Glory Be to the Father...)	Meal Prayers	

Home Activities:

- attend Mass weekly in your parish; sit near the front where your child can see what’s going on, break open the Gospel and homily later in the day.
- read stories from the Bible, especially creation and stories about Jesus
- pray before meals
- before bedtime, bless your child by signing a cross on his/her forehead as a reminder of his/her Baptism and pray with him/her
- celebrate the Church seasons in your home: have an Advent wreath for Advent, a Nativity set for Christmas, service opportunities throughout the year , prayers in Lent, Easter joy, talk about the saints and their lives as heroes. Visit often for ideas and lives of saints: www.religionteachersjournal.com; www.osv.com; www.americancatholic.org; www.usccb.org.
- involve your child in recycling, respecting the environment; watering plants
- show baptismal pictures and symbols to your child; go up to the baptismal font when in Church
- discuss TV shows your child watches; watch with him/her
- say a prayer for anyone in your neighborhood who is not feeling well or has just had a baby, or has just lost a loved one

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