



## Archdiocese of San Francisco

### **Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Religion Curriculum For Parishes and Schools**

#### **Introduction**

It is not unreasonable to expect that graduates of parish religion programs and Catholic elementary schools have an age-appropriate knowledge of the major aspect of the Church's doctrines, moral teachings, sacramental and spiritual life. These guidelines will guide programs in the design of Religion curriculum, the selection of appropriate textbooks, and the training of catechists. Given the diversity of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, parishes and schools will need to adapt these guidelines according to local needs.

These concepts were identified in language suited for those adults who are primarily responsible for Religious Education curriculum and instruction. These concepts are to be used in the following manner:

- For use by parish and school personnel in the selection and evaluation of catechetical textbooks
- For use by individual grade level Catechists in order to ensure that these concepts, irregardless of whatever Religion textbook is in usage at the local school, are covered at the grade level of instruction to which they have been assigned

These concepts, along with effective teaching techniques, are presented in age-appropriate language in the textbooks approved by the Department of Catholic Schools and the Office of Religious Education & Youth Ministry in collaboration with the Archbishop.

It is very important that Principals and Religion Coordinators, Parish Catechetical Leaders, and especially grade level catechists understand the meaning of each concept at each level of religious instruction.

Certification through the California Catholic Conference of Bishops of Catechists is required to help catechists deepen their knowledge and understanding of the faith and how to teach it appropriately.

## **The Organization of These Outcomes**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has proven to be an invaluable resource for those entrusted with catechetical leadership and ministry. Because of the comprehensive nature of the *Catechism*, we have decided to base our Elementary School Religion Curriculum on its contents. At each grade level, Religion learning outcomes have been organized according to the four parts of the *Catechism*:

*Part One:*    The Profession of Faith

These outcomes reflect students' knowledge of God's salvific and gradual revelation of love to the human race, and the human response of faith. Primary among these outcomes is students' awareness of their Baptismal call to live in the love of the one God who is three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*Part Two:*    The Celebration of the Christian Mystery

These outcomes reflect students' knowledge of how the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church make present the saving action of Christ's Paschal Mystery and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

*Part Three:* Life in Christ

These outcomes reflect students' awareness of the ultimate human vocation: living a life of holiness. An emphasis on the Church's moral teachings, the Beatitudes, and the Ten Commandments are reflected at various levels of the elementary curriculum.

*Part Four:*    Christian Prayer

These outcomes reflect students' awareness of the importance of prayer as an essential means for their growth in the Christian life. The rich heritage of Catholic spirituality and the various prayer forms of the Church are emphasized throughout the curriculum. A special focus is given to the Lord's Prayer as the pre-eminent prayer of Christians.

On the following pages you will find:

- “Exit” learning outcomes for 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates of elementary schools and programs. These refer to the general knowledge of Catholic faith graduating students should have gained over the course of their entire elementary careers.
- Grade level outcomes organized according to the four parts of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Please note that not all religion textbook series organize their materials in the same manner. This is acceptable as long as the contents of the textbooks, at each level, correspond to the learning outcomes identified by the Department of Catholic Schools’ K-8 Religion Curriculum or the Office of Religious Education and Youth Ministry Curriculum.
- Grade level performance indicators identify the learning and formation that has taken place. They direct the observation of catechists and parents on the celebration of faith growth and deepening of life in the Catholic Church. Each learning community will develop performance indicators appropriate for their grade, cultural and parish environment. Indicators are based on the kindergarten – grade 8 outcomes of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

## **Conclusion**

Religious instruction is at the heart of any Catholic program. For this to be done in a meaningful way, religious instruction must be taught in an environment where the Gospel virtues of faith, hope, and love are “living, conscious, and active” in every area of the curricular and extra-curricular programs.

Catechists have been entrusted with a wonderful opportunity to make a significant impact on their students’ lives. In these difficult times, the living-out of Jesus’ message and example is an urgent mandate. For this reason, only those who live the Catholic faith, know and understand the doctrines of the Church, and are willing to teach Religion in a creative, comprehensive, and meaningful way are qualified to fulfill this important service in an authentic way.

## Religious Education Exit Outcomes

Upon graduation from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, elementary students will have a basic understanding of the following concepts:

### Area #1: ***The Profession of Faith*** \*

1. The human person is made in the image and likeness of the Triune **God**, has a basic capacity to experience God's presence, and is capable of knowing **God** through the natural light of reason.
2. **God** reveals "religious and moral truths which humans cannot possibly arrive at by their own powers." These truths belong to the order of Divine **Revelation**.
3. Beginning with his Covenant with the People of Israel, and in gradual stages thereafter, **God** revealed the mystery of His plan of loving goodness. This plan has its origins and fulfillment in the **Incarnation** and mission of **Jesus Christ**.
4. Divine **Revelation** is given in two distinct ways: Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Both of these have been entrusted to the **Church** in order to help the **faithful** see the presence of Christ in every age.
5. Scripture, Tradition, and the Church's **Magisterium** help **Catholics** grow in their understanding of Divine **Revelation** and serve as a guide through all the stages of life.
6. Sacred Scripture is the inspired Word of **God**. Included in this concept are an understanding of the major principles of Catholic biblical interpretation and a basic knowledge of the stories and teachings of the Old and New Testaments.
7. The core beliefs expressed in the **Creed**: the **Trinity**, the salvific life and message of **Jesus Christ**, the nature of the **Church**, **grace**, **sin**, **Redemption** and the afterlife.
8. The **Church**, as the People of **God** and **Body of Christ**, extends Christ's proclamation of the **Kingdom of God** in every age and culture.
9. That **God** is present in and works through all people of good will and that **Christians** are called to respect all person's rights to religious freedom.

10. That each person has unique gifts and is called to use these gifts to build God's Kingdom.\*

Area #2: ***The Celebration of the Christian Mystery***

1. The liturgy is the primary way **Catholics** gather for worship and is a "reflection of and participation in God's work of **salvation**." This sacred action surpasses all other activities of the **Church**.
2. Liturgical celebrations are an experience of **Jesus'** Priestly ministry. By participation in the **Church's** liturgical life, **Catholics** join **Jesus** in worship of the Father through the power of the **Holy Spirit**.
3. Through liturgy **Catholics** participate in the Paschal Mystery of Christ's suffering, death and **resurrection**. Liturgy is the "foretaste of the Heavenly worship to which all **Christians** are called."
4. The various signs and symbols, words and actions, music and holy images utilized in sacred places and liturgical functions.
5. The importance of Sunday as the **Lord's Day**, and the celebration of the **Mass** through the various seasons of the **Liturgical year**.
6. The nature of the seven **Sacraments** as signs of God's **grace** given to the **Church** by Christ. How these **Sacraments** "touch all the stages and all of the important moments of the Christian life."
7. The meaning and rites of the **Sacraments of Initiation**, **Sacraments of Healing**, and **Sacraments at the Service of Communion**.
8. The use of "sacramentals" and other spiritual practices celebrated by **Catholics** universally and those celebrated by the various cultural groups in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.
9. The local **parish** as the primary community in which **Catholics** live out their **faith** in Christ and join in worship of **God**.
10. How to design, implement, and participate in liturgical and other **prayer** services.

Area #3: ***Life in Christ***

1. The human person is endowed with an immortal soul and is destined for eternal happiness with **God** in union with all the **saints**.

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\* Bolded words have definitions in Dictionary of Terms

2. The human person is given the gift of reason and is capable of understanding the order of things established by **God**. Because of this, the human person is able to find ultimate happiness by “seeking and loving what is true and good.”
3. The human person, by **virtue** of the spiritual powers of intellect and will, is endowed with freedom that finds its fullest expression in recognizing the voice of **God** which urges him/her “to do what is good and avoid what is evil.”
4. That humanity, tempted by the Evil One, abused its freedom at the beginning of history by giving in to the temptation to do evil. Although human persons still desire the good, their nature still bears the wounds of **Original Sin**.
5. Through Christ’s **Incarnation**, death, and **resurrection**, humanity was delivered from **sin** and evil and freed for new life in the **Holy Spirit**.
6. A disciple of Christ is called to mature in **grace**, be capable of acting rightly and doing good, and “attain the perfection of charity which is holiness.”
7. The basic tenets of Catholic Moral Teachings such as: Human Freedom and Christian Beatitude; Freedom and Responsibility; the formation of a Moral **Conscience**; the **Virtues**; **Sin**; Social Justice; Law and **Grace**; the role of the Magisterium.
8. The importance of the **Beatitudes** and the Decalogue in the formation of a Christian moral **conscience**.
9. How the Precepts of the **Church**, and the Corporal and **Spiritual Works of Mercy** help **Christians** grow in holiness and integrity.
10. The centrality of a respect for human life in all its diversity, stages of development, and social contexts.
11. The importance of developing a sense of stewardship over the gift of Creation.
12. The importance of service to the local and global communities as a primary way of modeling Christian discipleship.
13. How **Mary** and the **saints** model **Christian holiness**, justice, mercy, and service.

14. How the major figures of the **Old and New Testaments** model holiness, justice, mercy and service.

Area #4: ***Christian Prayer***

1. That **prayer**, in all of its variety and settings, is a primary way of developing a vital and loving relationship with **God**.
2. That **prayer** is a response to **God's** loving invitation to enter into a relationship with each human person.
3. That **prayer** is directed to **God** the Father, in union with **Jesus** Christ, and is made possible by the **grace** of the **Holy Spirit**.
4. How the holy men and women of the **Old and New Testaments** serve as models of **prayer**.
5. How Christian **prayer** is patterned after the example of **Jesus**: solitary and communal **prayer**; prayers of adoration, praise, **petition** and **intercession**, and thanksgiving.
6. How the "**Our Father**" is a summary of the **Gospel** and the primary **prayer** of the **Church**.
7. How to develop a personal **prayer** life that allows each student to grow in **faith**, hope, and love.

## The Catechetical Outcomes and Performance Indicators

The Catechetical Outcomes and Performance Indicators are the basic expectations for religious formation of youth Grades K-8 in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. This endeavor must be a joint effort between parents, pastors, catechists, Catholic school teachers and the parish community to strengthen the faith life for each child. These expectations give a clear and comprehensive picture of the learning competencies per grade level. In catechetical efforts of instruction and formation the passing on of the faith must be “comprehensive and systematic”. (NDC pg. 260)

We are entrusted with the gift of ministering to our children. The person of the catechist who images Jesus is central. Methodology, textbooks and materials of the highest quality must be used to insure success. Trained, dedicated teachers and catechetical leaders of the faith are required to diligently work to provide a comprehensive plan for faith growth. These outcomes form the direction of the Archdiocese of San Francisco in providing this plan. We use as our base the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The catechism provides a sound structure for catechesis in our time. This comprehensive planning process completes the Religious Education Curriculum approved for use in the Archdiocese in 2003 by Archbishop William Levada.

The indicators at the end of each grade level are examples to show how students demonstrate the acquired knowledge, experience and daily practice of their faith. Each catechetical minister and program is required to develop indicators for his/her students. These are to be shared with the catechetical team as well as parents. Sample indicators are at the end of each grade level. A sample form for developing the program indicators and assessing student's progress are found in the back of this document. A systematic and comprehensive planning worksheet is also provided for use in completing a curriculum plan.