

## Basic Building Blocks of the Universal Curriculum

The U.S. Bishops wrote in the NDC, "...catechesis comprises six fundamental tasks, each of which is related to an aspect of faith in Christ. All efforts in evangelization and catechesis should incorporate these tasks." (#20)

These six tasks are:

1. Knowledge of the Catholic Faith
2. Knowledge of the meaning of Liturgy and sacraments
3. Moral formation in Jesus Christ
4. How to pray with Christ
5. Prepare the Christian to live in community and participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
6. Promotes a missionary spirit that prepared the faithful to be present as Christians in society.

## Overview of Grade Level Themes

- K. God Made the World: Nature, Animals, Water, Light, Humanity, Mary, Jesus
1. God Loves Us: Knowledge of Jesus, Baptism, Belonging to Church, Following Jesus
  2. Jesus Share's God's Life with Us: Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus calls us to forgive and be forgiven, the Eucharist
  3. We are the Church: The Early Church, the Church Year, Universal Church, the Mass, the Kingdom of God
  4. God's Law Guides Us: The Commandments, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, Forming a Conscience
  5. We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments: 7 Sacraments, In-depth Study of the Mass, Mary, the Creed

6. We are God's People: Salvation History in the Old Testament: Revelation, Introduction to the Bible, Covenant, beginning of the Church
7. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life: the Gospels, the Promise of Salvation, Jesus the Bread of Life, the Promised Messiah, the Healer, Call to Holiness
8. God's Faith Stands the Test of Time: Church History, the Moral Life, Respect Life, Belonging to the Communion of Saints
9. Scripture Study: All aspects and tools for studying and integrating the Bible into everyday life.
10. Catholic Doctrine and Belief: Appreciation of the beliefs, rituals, moral vision and prayer models of the Catholic Church
11. Catholic Morality: Moral Law, Moral Decision Making, Integrity, Moral barometers versus society
12. Liturgy and Sacraments: Devotional Prayer, Celebration of Salvation History through the Liturgical Year, Theology of Sacraments.

In order that your child/youth understands, processes, and internalizes the Church teachings presented at each grade level, **it is imperative that families ascertain attendance and participation at all levels.** As promised when your son or daughter was baptized: "You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's Commandments as Christ taught us..." (Rite of Baptism #77, )

Your parish is here to assist you as you train your child for a lifetime of practicing the Catholic Faith. Your parish contact for Christian Formation is:

# A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## to the Religious Education Curriculum of the Diocese of St. Augustine



*Office of  
Christian Formation*

Pope St. John Paul II states in his Exhortation on catechetics, *Catechesi tradendae*, that the whole of catechetical work implies that collaboration must take place between Church authorities and parents:

*“...the name catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ.” (#1)*

***This brochure has been prepared to equip parents with an understanding of the universal curriculum of the Diocese and how it relates to the formation in the faith of their children and youth.***

Parents have the primary responsibility for the faith formation of their children. The Church is obligated to provide them with full support in this endeavor. The universal curriculum of the Diocese of St. Augustine places the responsibility for faith formation on many shoulders. The universal curriculum, the areas of responsibility and general principles are based on the following documents, which will be quoted throughout this brochure:

*Catechesi Tradendae (1979)*

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*

*Code of Canon Law (Canon)*

*Local Policies*

*National Directory for Catechesis in the United States (NDC, USCCB, 2005)*

*Rite of Baptism of Children (1970)*

## **The Various Roles**

### **United States Conference of Bishops**

**(USCCB):** Examines Materials to discern which are in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. A link to this approved list is provided. <http://www.usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/subcommittee-on-catechism/upload/Current-Conformity-List.pdf>

**The Diocesan Bishop:** By virtue of his office, the bishop is the chief catechist of his diocese “it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to issue norms concerning Catechetics and to make provision that suitable instruments are available...and by fostering and coordinating catechetical endeavors.” (Canon 775 §1)

**The Parish:** “The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is the privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (CCC§ 2226)

**The Pastor:** ...”the pastor is bound to provide for the catechetical formation of adults, young people, and children, ...the pastor is to promote and foster the role of parents in the family catechesis mentioned in Canon 774§ 2 (Canon 776)

### **The Director or Coordinator of Religious Education:**

“Under the direction of the pastor, the competent and qualified catechetical leader has as a main responsibility to direct all of the parish catechetical programs for adults, youth, and children.” (NDC #54, 5)

**The Parents:** “Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years...Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith.” (CCC §2226)

## **History and Rationale of the Universal Curriculum**

The National Directory for Catechesis in the United States (2005) called for a universal curriculum to be developed in each diocese. This universal curriculum is to serve those being educated in Catholic Schools, Parish Schools of Religion and those families who choose to homeschool their children. The NDC asked for uniformity in the curriculum for all areas. In 2009, Bishop Galeone asked this to happen with the varied curricula that were in use at the time. During the summer of 2009, work was done to unify the curricula in use in the Diocese to bring it in compliance with the NDC six tasks of catechesis as well as the current *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This universal curriculum was approved in January, 2010 with implementation for the following 2010-2011 academic year.

The rationale for the Religion Curriculum of the Diocese of St. Augustine is to assist the learner in understanding and responding to the fullness of the Christian life. The Church uses a systematic approach to teach the message of Jesus Christ. Each year of instruction builds on the previous year of instruction. Every year, children and youth are exposed to the same concepts at a deeper level as well as to new concepts which are age appropriate. Similar to curriculum in other areas like math and science, there needs to be a continuity of presentation of the concepts of the faith without any gaping holes. It is vitally important and indeed the role of the diocesan bishop, the parish, the pastor and the parents to ascertain that children and youth are not deprived of any part of the curriculum.