

ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI

Religious Education Curriculum

2017



Office of Catechesis

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Acknowledgements

The work of developing this Religious Education curriculum is the work of great love and commitment to the mission of the Catholic Church of Miami to witness and teach the Good News of Jesus Christ as articulated in the Scriptures and in the teachings of the Church. There are many people to thank for the accomplishment of this project.

First, we thank Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, who directed the Office for Catechesis to revise and share the Archdiocesan Religious Education Curriculum and Dr. Kim Pryzbylski, Secretary of Secretariat for Education. We thank the people listed below who have made particular contributions to the direction, design, writing, reviewing and editing of the document. Without their assistance and the help of many others this work could not have been accomplished.

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The Archdiocese of Miami is grateful to the Archdiocese of Washington for the permission to use significant portions of their *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization's* curriculum. We are also grateful to the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States and the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Understanding The Religious Education Curriculum

The design and writing of the Religious Education Curriculum resulted from the 2012 Second General Synod's priorities for Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Miami. Recommendations in the synod called for a more cohesive approach to imparting the faith of the Church for children and youth. The Office of Catechesis initiated local parish visitations to assess how the faith is being shared to youth and children. Pastors, Catechetical Leaders and catechists began to ask for guidance and direction as to how they could become more effective in the sharing of the faith while keeping an archdiocesan standardized vision of systematic formation.

The primary aim of this Religious Education Curriculum is to support systematic planning and preparations across all Religious Education programs of the Archdiocese of Miami. This will be done as a part of an archdiocesan-wide effort to strengthen the sharing of the faith for youth and children from pre-kinder through twelve grade.

These guidelines focus on the need for mutual collaboration, communication and consultation. They strive to clarify the roles, responsibilities and mutual accountabilities needed by pastors, catechetical leaders and catechists, who assist efforts to put youth and children into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ through ongoing systematic catechesis in and through the Catholic Church.

The Religious Education Curriculum has its foundation on the pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the six key elements of Catechesis as stated in the National Directory for Catechesis. The Religious Education Curriculum goals invite and challenge both the learner and the Catechist to understand the meaning of discipleship and respond to the call of discipleship through full participation in the life of the Church and witnessing God's mercy in every aspect of life.

Setting Archdiocesan standards allows for equal opportunity across our parish religious education programs, catechist have common standards by which to teach and participants are compared to the same standards mindful of each particular cultural contexts. Setting standards is an important and effective learning tool because they express clear expectations of what knowledge of the faith and what skills and practices of living the faith should be shared and learned.

The Religious Education Curriculum is organized in a spiral scope and sequence, meaning the participant returns to each topic each year, always in age appropriate language and teaching methods and is invited to constant conversion and relationship with Jesus Christ. These guidelines were based on the Archdiocese of Miami Religious Education Curriculum and the Archdiocese of Washington *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization's* curriculum. The task force also consulted the Mission Education Guidelines from the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States and the Archdiocese of Chicago Religion Curriculum.

A Creative and Holistic Systematic Catechesis

Catechists will plan their instruction around how to effectively help the participant understand and internalize the message. They do this by reflection on three questions in the order given below.

1. **Intended learning:** What should the participants know, understand and be able to do and state as observable behavior?
2. **Strategies:** What will I do to help the participants be ready to effectively demonstrate the evidence of their learning? (teaching and learning activities, resources, field trips, etc.)
3. **Assessment:** What will students do to show me that they acquired and can use the knowledge, skill and understanding of the outcome?

The Religion Education Curriculum provides the starting and ending answers for questions 1 and 3. The standards and indicators will help them to develop the intermediate strategies.

Standards

The standards form the foundation of the Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide. Because of their significance, the standards are repeated for every grade level with indicators developed for each standard. As with any standard in a curriculum, the developmental level of the student determines how deeply a goal can be understood or interpreted in light of the indicators.

Indicators

Indicators, also called learning outcomes, state what a participant needs to be able to do or to understand. The indicators, which directly support learning aspects of the standard at developmentally appropriate times, describe the basic content for each grade level, providing a major reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Indicators for each of the standards are measurable.

Colored background indicates that the indicator is an “adaptive material” for children with special needs. These should be adapted via creative accommodations. The Curriculum envisions that all children with mild disabilities will be mainstreamed into regular sessions. Children with moderate or severe disabilities learn best individually, accompanied by a peer teen-catechist, and placed in an environment suited for children with sensory-process impairments to minimize distractions.

Italicized print indicates that the standard is not a core material but introductory or enrichment material that may have already been mentioned elsewhere or may be repeated again. It should only be covered as a supplement to the core material outlined.

Catechetical Key Elements

To support young disciples in formation on their journey of communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ, we will look at the six tasks of catechesis as the six key elements of living a Christian life.

Key Element I: Knowledge of the Faith

“Sacred Scripture has a preeminent position in catechesis because Sacred Scripture ‘presents God’s own Word in unalterable form’ and ‘makes the voice of the Holy Spirit resound again and again in the words of the prophets and apostles.’ The Catechism of the Catholic Church is intended to complement Sacred Scripture. Together with Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture constitutes the supreme rule of faith.” (NDC, 24)

First and foremost, every parish community of faith is a sacred place to encounter the living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. Spe Salvi, 4).

By deepening knowledge of the faith, catechesis nourishes the life of faith and equips it to explain itself to the world. The meaning of the Creed, which is a compendium of Scripture and of the faith of the Church, is the realization of this task. (GDC, 85)

The initial proclamation of the Gospel introduces the hearers to Christ for the first time and invites conversion to him. By the action of the Holy Spirit, such an encounter engenders in the hearers a desire to know about Christ, his life, and the content of his message. Catechesis responds to this desire, by giving the believers a knowledge of the content of God's self-revelation which is found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, and by introducing them to the meaning of the Creed. Creeds and doctrinal formulas that state the Church's belief are expressions of the Church's living tradition, which from the time of the apostles has developed "in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit." (NDC, 20.1)

Key Element II: Liturgy and Sacraments

“Faith and worship are as closely related to one another as they were in the early Church: faith gathers the community for worship, and worship renews the faith of the community... In her Liturgy, the Church celebrates what she professes and lives above all the Paschal Mystery, by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.” (NDC, 32)

In the Church's Liturgy, in her prayer, in the living community of believers, we experience the love of God, we perceive God's presence and we thus learn to recognize that presence in our daily lives. God has loved us first and He continues to do so; we too, then, can respond with love. God does not demand of us a feeling which we ourselves are incapable of producing. God loves us and makes us see and experience his love, and since God has “loved us first”, love can also blossom as a response within us. (Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 17)

“Since Christ is present in the sacraments, the believer comes to know Christ in the communal liturgical celebrations of the Church and is drawn into communion with him. Christ's saving action in the Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, where the closest communion with Jesus on earth is possible as Catholics are able to receive his living Flesh and his Precious Blood in Holy Communion. Catechesis should promote "an active, conscious genuine

participation in the liturgy of the Church, not merely by explaining the meaning of the ceremonies, but also by forming the minds of the faithful for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for a community spirit, and for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds." (NDC, 20.2)

Christ is always present in his Church, especially in 'liturgical celebrations'. Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. The Church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy. (GDC, 85)

Key Element III: Life in Christ

"Christ is the norm of morality. 'Christian morality consists in following Jesus Christ, in abandoning oneself to him, in letting oneself be transformed by his grace and renewed by his mercy, gifts which come to us in the living communion of his Church.'" (NDC, 42)

Jesus' moral teaching is an integral part of his message. Catechesis must transmit both the content of Christ's moral teachings as well as their implications for Christian living. Moral Catechesis aims to conform the believer to Christ – to bring about personal transformation and conversion. It should encourage the faithful to give witness – both in their private lives and in the public arena – to Christ's teaching in everyday life. Such testimony demonstrates the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel. (NDC, 20.3)

Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master himself. The disciples thus undertake a journey of interior transformation, in which, by participating in the paschal mystery of the Lord, "they pass from the old man to the new man who has been made perfect in Christ." (GDC, 85)

Key Element IV: Prayer

"God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer" (CCC, 1075). His initiative comes first; the human response to his initiative is itself prompted by the grace of the Holy Spirit... In prayer, the Holy Spirit not only reveals the identity of the Triune God to human persons but also reveals the identity of human persons to themselves. (NDC, 34)

Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for his glory. (GDC, 85) It is in prayer that we contemplate God's loving gaze. He always looks at us with love. In prayer we can feel that he asks us something, he forgives us for something and he gives us a mission. Catechesis must then transmit a profound sense that Jesus, coming to the altar, fixes His gaze on each one of us, forgives our shortcoming and encourages us to go forward on the path that He first created enabling us to love others with a merciful gaze.

"Catechesis should invite the believer to join Christ in the Our Father. Prayer should be the ordinary environment for all catechesis so that the knowledge and practice of the Christian life may be understood and celebrated in its proper context." (NDC, 20.4)

Key Element V: Education for Living in the Christian Community

“The created things of this world are not free of ownership: ‘For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living’ (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. Here I would reiterate that ‘God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement’ (EG, 215)”
(Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 89)

“Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. Catechesis encourages the disciples of Jesus to make their daily conduct a shining and convincing testimony to the Gospel. Preparation for community life has an ecumenical dimension as well: [...]’catechesis takes special note of the ecumenical dimension and encourages fraternal attitudes toward members of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities.’ It should always provide a clear exposition of all that the Church teaches and at the same time should foster a ‘true desire for unity’ and inculcate a zeal for the promotion of unity among Christians.” (NDC, 20.5)

Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life

“The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.”
(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 24)

Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society. The ‘world’ thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation. Catechesis seeks to help the Disciples of Christ to be present in society precisely as believing Christians who are able and willing to bear witness to their faith in words and deeds. In fostering this spirit of evangelization, catechesis nourishes the evangelical attitudes of Jesus Christ in the faithful: to be poor in spirit, to be compassionate, to be meek, to hear the cry of injustice, to be merciful, to be pure of heart, to make peace, and to accept rejection and persecution. Catechesis recognizes that other religious traditions reflect the “seeds of the Word” that can constitute a true “preparation for the Gospel.” It encourages adherents of the world’s religions to share what they hold in common, never minimizing the real differences between and among them. “Dialogue is not in opposition to the mission ad gentes.” (NDC, 20.6)

Catechesis is also open to the missionary dimension. This seeks to equip the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives. It also

prepares them to lend their cooperation to the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation. (GDC, 86A)

In educating for this missionary sense, catechesis is also necessary for inter-religious dialogue, if it renders the faithful capable of meaningful communication with men and women of other religions. Catechesis shows that the link between the Church and non-Christian religions is, in the first place, the common origin and end of the human race, as well as the "many seeds of the word which God has sown in these religions". Catechesis too helps to reconcile and, at the same time, to distinguish between "the proclamation of Christ" and "inter-religious dialogue". These two elements, while closely connected, must not be confused for "dialogue does not dispense from evangelization." (GDC, 86B)

Six Key Elements of Catechesis (and Pillars of the Catechism)	Standards
Knowledge of Faith (Profession of Faith)	<p>1. CREED: Understand, believe and proclaim the Triune and redeeming God as revealed in creation and human experience, in Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, and as entrusted to the teaching office of the Church.</p> <p>2. SACRED SCRIPTURE: Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God’s revelation through Sacred Scripture.</p>
Liturgy and Sacraments (Celebration of the Christian Mystery)	<p>3. SACRAMENTS: Understand and participate in the sacraments of the Church as effective signs of God’s grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.</p> <p>4. LITURGY: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the liturgical year and epitomized in the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life.</p>
Life in Christ (Life in Christ)	<p>5. CONSCIENCE: Develop a moral conscience informed by Church teachings.</p> <p>6. CHRISTIAN LIVING: Understand and live the moral teachings of the Church through a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ expressed in love for God, love of neighbor, conversion, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, and the dignity of the human person.</p>
Prayer (Christian Prayer)	<p>7. PRAYER: Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer and acknowledge prayer as the primary way we deepen our knowledge and relationship with God in the community.</p>
Education for Living in the Christian Community (Life in Christ)	<p>8. CATHOLIC CHURCH: Understand and appreciate the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, the community of believers, as expressed in the Church’s origin, mission of evangelization, hierarchical structure, marks, charisms, members and the communion of saints.</p> <p>9. ECUMENISM: Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with other Catholic (Eastern), Orthodox, and Christian churches.</p> <p>10. CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES AND RELATIONSHIPS: Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations.</p> <p>11. VOCATION: Understand and undertake discipleship in Christ responding in faith by participating in the mission of the Church through living a specific call in the life of the Church.</p>
Evangelization and Apostolic Life (Life in Christ)	<p>12. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Know, understand, critique and apply social justice and stewardship principles to societal situations in a way that acknowledges and affirms the dignity of the human person and community.</p> <p>13. INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with Jews, Muslims, and all other faith traditions.</p> <p>14. MISSIONARY VOCATION: Demonstrate an appreciation for Catholic missionary and evangelization efforts through our parish community, its culture, worship, sacramental life, and service.</p>

Adaptive Catechesis

When it comes to catechesis: creative adaptation is the key! Creative adaptation is the process in which the catechetical curriculum is adapted to recognize the limitations and develop the gifts that each child brings. As effective as these adaptations may be, it is important to evaluate them and incorporate them according to the particularity of your every child. Adaptive Catechesis assures us that all children share together, as much as possible, with the necessary support; All children receive assistance according to their limitations but in common settings; All children should participate in all activities, prayers, and program celebrations.

Within the scope of special needs we have those who present cognitive, auditory, that affect mobility, visual/blindness. While the names (labels) used to identify anomalies in people are constantly changing, these allow us to identify resources and methods to share the faith with all God's children.

We propose the following nine domains of accommodations for students with special needs based on the work of Dr. Stephen Shore.

1. **Size:** determine the amount of work allocated by session.
2. **Time:** provide graphical timeline representation, as they might have difficulty understanding or performing long-term tasks.
3. **Level of support:** discern if the participant is ready to participate in a larger class, a smaller class or one-on-one sessions. In all three of these consider using the accompaniment of a **Catechist aide** as it helps the student to gain a stronger understanding of the content, respond within their abilities, and it also helps to build friendships. In some inescapable situations in which a child or young person's fragile health does not allow them to go out and be with other children, they could be prepared at home by their parents or a catechist. In this case, the catechist could go to their home, or perhaps the parents can work with the child in the home under the direction and support of the local catechetical leader.
4. **Input:** take into account the participant learning styles as their dependence on their learning style is more extreme.
5. **Difficulty:** ensure that the assigned task matches the participant's ability.
6. **Output:** consider using various ways to assess their knowledge (for example, through technology, orally, mental maps, etc.).
7. **Participation:** determine how to meaningfully involve participants in accordance with their talents (A person with autism may not be able to stand still and sing in a class choir but instead can hold and wave a flag related to the song, therefore they are involved in a meaningful way).
8. **Alternate:** adapt expectations and develop lessons in small pieces as some aspects might required longer time for processing.
9. **Adaptive Curriculum:** review the colored background indicator and discern the best environment suited for learning.