

Catholic Diocese of Fargo – North Dakota

Parish Catechesis Manual,
Curriculum Guidelines, and
Preparation for Sacraments of Initiation

September 2003

September, 14, 2003
Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Dear Friends,

It is with great joy on this feast day of the Holy Cross that we receive a copy of the *Parish Catechesis Manual and Curriculum Guidelines* for the Diocese of Fargo as promulgated by Bishop Samuel Aquila.

These guidelines have been developed following a process of study, discussion, consultation, writing and editing. I wish to express my gratitude to all those who gave their time, effort and expertise to this project. I am especially appreciative to the pastors and parish directors and coordinators.

The Office for Evangelization and Catechesis is now beginning a 15-month process of introducing and reviewing these guidelines with you as pastors and catechetical leaders. You, then, in your leadership role are asked to review and implement the guidelines in your respective parishes and missions.

For practical purposes, these guidelines will become effective **September 2005**. At that time you will be asked to use them to direct the scope and content of catechetical programs on levels of Pre-K through Twelfth-Grade in your parishes.

Finally, I thank each one of you for your tireless dedication to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I ask our Blessed Mother Mary, Queen of Peace and Star of the New Evangelization, to continue to intercede for you as you courageously proclaim Christ and the teachings of His Church. May you always do “whatever He tells you to do” (Jn 2).

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Stella Marie Jeffrey
Director for Evangelization and Catechesis

**Contributions to the
Catholic Diocese of Fargo
Parish Catechesis Manual, Curriculum Guidelines, and
Preparation for Sacraments of Initiation**

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*We acknowledge the many contributions made by the
priests and parish DOC OR DRE's and coordinators of the Diocese of Fargo.*

*Many of you provided comments and suggestions.
In addition your questions served to form the current text.*

Diocesan Curricula Utilized as Primary Resources

*Sioux Falls
Columbus
Lincoln
New York
Washington*

*Buffalo
New Orleans
Peoria
Pittsburgh
Atlanta*

*Cleveland
Fort Wayne - South Bend
Minneapolis - St. Paul
Philadelphia*



Section I.

Introduction

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity”
(Pope John Paul II, *On Catechesis In Our Time*, 5).

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Parish Catechesis Manual, Curriculum Guidelines, and
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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	
	Introduction.....	13
	Using This Curriculum Guide.....	15
	Important Catechetical Documents.....	17
II.	Policy	
	What Is This Called? Catechist or Teacher?	3
	General Parish Catechesis Policy.....	4
	Adult Parish Catechesis Is Primary.....	6
	Catholic Schools are Preferable	7
	Parish Catechesis for Children.....	8
	Homeschool Guidelines.....	9
	Sacramental Preparation	11
	Family Life and Chastity Education Guidelines.....	12
	The Catechumenate is the Model for All Catechesis.....	13
	Catechetical Models.....	14
	Elements of the Catechetical Effort	16
	Purpose of the Textbook	17
	Who Needs a Textbook? Why?	18
	Diocesan Textbook Evaluation.....	19
	Diocesan Textbook Evaluation Terminology	20
	Process for Selecting Textbooks.....	21
	Recommended Textbooks.....	23
	Recommended Textbooks: Adult.....	23
	Recommended Textbooks: PreK/K.....	24
	Recommended Textbooks: Grades 1-6	27
	Recommended Textbooks: Grades 7-8	30
	Recommended Textbooks: Grades 9-12	33
	Recommended Textbooks: Baptism Preparation	37
	Recommended Textbooks: First Reconciliation Prep	38
	Recommended Textbooks: Confirmation Preparation.....	39
	Recommended Textbooks: First Eucharist Prep	40
III.	Curriculum	
	Pre-Kindergarten.....	3
	Kindergarten	9
	First Grade	17
	Second Grade.....	27

(Table of Contents, p. 2-4)

Third Grade.....	39
Fourth Grade.....	51
Fifth Grade.....	63
Sixth Grade.....	79
Seventh Grade.....	93
Eighth Grade.....	111
Ninth Grade.....	131
Tenth Grade.....	141
Eleventh Grade.....	151
Twelfth Grade.....	161
Adults.....	171
IV. Sacramental Preparation	
Baptism Preparation Handbook.....	11
First Reconciliation Preparation Handbook.....	11
Confirmation Preparation Handbook.....	11
First Communion Preparation Handbook.....	11
V. Catechesis in A Parish Setting	
Overview of Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
Qualities, Competencies and Skills of the Catechist.....	6
Substitute Catechists.....	8
Imagining Out-of-the-Ordinary Catechists.....	9
Catechist Formation and Certification.....	10
Remuneration (Salaries, Stipends...A Living Wage).....	12
Possible Parish Leadership Positions.....	20
Sample – Job Description and Contract.....	21
Effective DRE Skills.....	24
Communicating Effectively.....	26
Creating a Fellowship of Catechists.....	27
Recruiting and Training Catechists.....	28
Real Men as Catechists.....	30
Grandparents as Catechists.....	32
Keeping Records and Budgets.....	33
Legal Issues In Evangelization and Catechesis.....	34
Sample – Permission/Medical Release Forms.....	35
Celebrating Catechetical Sunday.....	39
Book of Blessings, the First Sacramental.....	40
Blessing of Catechists Within Mass.....	41
Blessing of Catechetical Session.....	43
Celebrating Your Parish Feast Day.....	47
Catechesis and Prayer.....	48

(Table of Contents, p. 3-4)

Sample Liturgy of the Word	49
Worksheet for Planning the Liturgy of the Word	50
Explanation of the Liturgy of the Hours (and a website reference).....	51
Litany of Catechetical Saints	52
Lectio Divina in the Catechism.....	53
Explanation of Lectio Divina.....	55
Sample Formats of Lectio Divina.....	56
Scheduling Time for Catechesis	59
Going Beyond One Hour A Week	60
Sample - Opening Letter to Parents	61
Sample - Parent Handbook	62
Sample – Attendance Record.....	67
Sample – Letter on Mass Attendance	68
What Every Catechist Should Know?.....	69
Aim of Catechesis.....	70
How to Be the Best Catechist	71
Divine Pedagogy.....	73
Faith and faith	74
Signs of Conversion.....	75
Helping Your Students Become Witnesses	77
Scripture, Catechism and the Liturgical Year.....	79
Catechist Toolbox	80
In the Heart and Mind of the Church.....	82
Insertion Into the Mystery.....	83
Sacred Scripture and Catechesis	84
Liturgy/Sacraments and Catechesis	85
Systematic Catechesis and Testimony	86
Classroom Management.....	87
Lesson Planning.....	90
Lesson Planning Worksheet Weekly/Daily Lesson	95
Lesson Planning Worksheet Year Sketch	97
Rule for Effective Discipline	98
Learning Styles	101
Catechesis for Those With Special Needs	102
Catechizing Children with Disabilities - Some Implications.....	106
Teaching Prayer and Prayers	111
What Do I Do Now? Ideas for Class	112
Sacraments Chart	115

Appendix

Prayers.....	A-3
Saints and Feastsdays	B-1
Glossary and Catechetical Formulas.....	C-1

(Table of Contents, p. 4-4)

Catechetical Documents.....	D-1
On Divine Revelation, Dogmatic Constitution (<i>Dei Verbum</i>)	D-1
Apostolic Letter on the CCC (<i>Laetamur magnopere</i>)	D-9
Apostolic Constitution on CCC (<i>Fidei depositum</i>)	D-11
On Catechesis In Our Time (<i>Catechesi tradendae</i>)	D-15
On Evangelization in the Modern World (<i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i>)	D-37
In the Beginning of the New Millenium (<i>Novo millennio inuente</i>)	D-55
Guide for Catechists.....	D-80
Adult Catechesis In the Christian Community	D-101
Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us.....	D-121
Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest (<i>Ecclesiae de mysterio</i>)	D-
On the Mercy of God, Encyclical Letter (<i>Dives in misericordia</i>)	D-
On Certain Aspects of the Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, Apostolic Letter (<i>Misericordia Dei</i>)	D-
On Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today, Apostolic Exhortation (<i>Reconciliatio et paententia</i>)	D-
Urging Confessors to Be Faithful and To Receive	D-
On Children’s First Confession Prior to First Communion	D-
On the Sacrament of Confirmation, Apostolic Constitution.....	D-
Confirmation Perfects Baptismal Grace, Papal General Audience.....	D-
Confirmation Seals Us With The Gift of the Spirit, Papal General Audience.....	D-
On the Eucharist In Its Relationship to the Church, Encyclical Letter (<i>Ecclesiae de Eucharistia</i>).....	D-
On Children’s First Confession Prior to First Communion	D-
Guidelines for the Reception of Communion, USCCB	D-
On Communion for Divorced and Remarried Persons	D-

I. Introduction

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life...I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.” John 8:12, 10:10

Introduction

Sound Catholic catechetical programs should be well-planned, having the objective of maturing the initial response of faith by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and message of our Lord Jesus Christ. “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ” (CT 5; cf. GDC 80). More specifically, catechesis presents the entire Faith in such a way that the Christian aided by grace will set himself to follow Christ and to learn more and more within the Church “to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments and to hope as He invites us to” (CT 20). Catechesis assists in holiness – making saints.

Every effort has been made, during the process of preparing this curriculum guide, to produce a tool that is practical. Hopefully, it should be easy to use, concise, encompassing all of the principal elements of the Christian message, and flexible for local situations.

The Diocesan Office for Catholic Education and Formation exists to serve pastors and catechists in these specific ways:

- to keep the diocese mindful of its mission to evangelize and catechize faithful to God’s Revelation of Himself and His Plan of salvation and sanctification as found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition as taught and proclaimed by the Magisterium of the Church;
- to support clergy in their role as evangelizers and catechists
- to assist in the formation of persons involved with evangelization and catechesis
- to supply guidelines for parish organization, programs of sacramental preparation and other programs to help parishes provide comprehensive catechesis;
- to recommend catechetical curricula and textbooks;
- to provide access to catechetical resources, including textbooks and instructional aids;
- to establish and provide instruments for evaluating programs and resources, both in their content and methodology;
- to propose alternative catechetical models which can be adapted to the needs of particular areas, parishes, or schools.

To honor the criteria of Pope John Paul II for effective catechesis (cf. CT 19, 21), and in carrying forth their overall aim in preparing this curriculum guide, the project coordinators and consulting team members cite the following purposes for this curriculum guide:

- A. Enable catechetical leaders in parish and school settings to design and implement a doctrinally sound, systematic and developmentally sound approach to catechesis
- B. Clarify for catechetical leaders the essential nature of the ministry of catechesis.
- C. Assist in the practical aspects of planning religion curricula and in the continuous progress of catechesis in the parish or school as a whole by identifying major themes and key concepts for learning at each level, by defining the minimal catechesis and learning objectives for each level and by indicating appropriate catechetical texts, manuals, audio-visuals, and other appropriate resources.
- D. Emphasize to catechists and catechetical leaders that all catechesis is rooted in Jesus Christ and is implemented in unity with and in respect to the Bishop's teaching office, and that every catechist and catechetical leader participates in her teaching ministry.
- E. Provide a renewed continuity between youth and adults in catechesis for young people within the Diocese, since the adult (Catholic community), especially parents, may anticipate a comprehensive, systematic approach to catechesis that can be undertaken from parish to parish, and from school to school.
- F. Facilitate the smooth and orderly transition of catechists and students as they move from one catechetical program to another.
- G. Inform the responsible selection and evaluation of catechetical resources for schools and the parish programs throughout the Diocese.

Using the Curriculum Guide

GENERAL

A curriculum answers the question, “What should a student be taught?” or “What should a student know at the end of the year?”

A curriculum is not intended to replace textbooks or other catechetical tools, but rather to focus these resources on the most important truths for a given age group. Textbooks are to be used to present the curriculum.

A catechetical curriculum assists in establishing a unified program within the parish and the diocese as a whole. For example, the curriculum guidelines set the standard for Kindergarten students to memorize the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be, thus every Kindergarten student within the parish and the entire diocese have the same standard regardless of the textbook series that is used.

The curriculum guidelines are written for the catechists. It will be the task of the catechist to communicate the truths in an understandable way to the children. Catechists should use the language of the Church found in Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and then explain the words or concepts that may not be understood. It is important not to underestimate the capacity of children to grasp ideas as well as the need to always challenge them to grow in understanding at every level. For example, a first grade student may have trouble pronouncing “transubstantiation” but the term may still be used along with the explanation that “the bread has been miraculously changed into Jesus.”

FORMAT OF THIS HANDBOOK

Grades PreK through Eight are presented in the following format: 1) Theme, 2) Creed, 3) Sacraments, 4) Moral Development, 5) Saints, 6) Prayer Life, 7) Scripture, 8) Vocabulary, and 9) Profile (Characteristics, Faith Development Needs, Implications). The High School curriculum focuses on one of these areas at a time while assuming a continued practice of the Catholic Faith.

Each year, the curriculum builds on the previous material. For example, the prayers learned in first grade are also required for second grade, third grade, etc. Another example would be the vocabulary words of the current year are additions to all the previous words. High School students are expected to learn vocabulary as needed.

The saints have been arranged so that at the completion of eighth grade, a student will be introduced to all of the patron saints of the parishes and Catholic facilities in the diocese. Also included in the “saints” section of each grade are common titles of Mary and Jesus. At the High School level additional saints are presented in the context of history and geography.

The current volume includes many resources for catechesis in addition to the curriculum which should be accessible to every catechist.

PARTICULAR USE OF THESE CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

PARENTS: Parents should be given a copy of the curriculum guidelines for their respective children. As the primary educators of their children, they should at least be given the opportunity to know what their child is expected to learn with regards to the Faith. In addition to their witness in living a sacramental life (e.g. weekly Sunday Mass, regular Reconciliation), family prayer, and daily charity, parents should be the ones to catechize their children on the stories of the saints, vocabulary words, prayers, and Scripture passages at the respective grade levels. A few minutes each week in a parish catechetical program will not be enough time for most children to even become familiar with these treasures much less memorize them.

CATECHISTS: Copies of the curriculum for specific grade levels should be made and distributed to the respective catechists. Catechists should be encouraged to find the curriculum points within the textbooks at their own grade level and adjust their lesson plans for the year accordingly. For example, most second grade textbooks series emphasize the Eucharist, yet in our diocese the emphasis is on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so more time should be spent on those chapters. An additional handbook will be published with regards to each of the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist along with recommended texts.

Catechists should also pay attention to the saints, vocabulary words, prayers and Scripture passages that are expected at each grade level in the curriculum. However, this does NOT mean that the catechist presents these for the first time in the classroom. Rather, the catechist is the one to review them in the classroom. Parents should carry out this responsibility of catechizing their children the stories of the saints, vocabulary words, prayers, and Scripture passages at home.

Important Catechetical Documents and Abbreviations

The Church, through the popes and bishops, has clearly set goals for evangelization and catechesis. **Without exception every pastor, director/coordinator and catechist should own and use the following documents, available online at <http://www.intratext.com/> or by contacting the diocesan office.**

Bible New American translation is recommended as it is used for liturgical celebrations

Rites of the Catholic Church as they pertain to preparation for the sacraments.

CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994, 2nd edition

CIC *Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)*
January 1983

CT *On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, 1979

ACCC *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*
International Council for Catechesis, 1990

EN *On Evangelization In the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*
Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, 1975

FC *The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (Familiaris consortio)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, November 22, 1981

GDC *General Directory for Catechesis*
Sacred Congregation of the Clergy, 1998

GC *Guide for Catechists*
Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 1993

Letter to Families
Pope John Paul II, February 02, 1994

NM *At the Beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Inuente)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, January 2001

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Documents of Vatican Council II

- SC Sacrosanctum concilium (Constitution On the Sacred Liturgy, Dec 4, 1963)
 - IM Inter mirifica (Decree on the Means of Social Communication, Dec 4, 1963)
 - LG Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Nov 21, 1964)
 - OE Orientalium ecclesiarum (Decree On Catholic Eastern Churches, Nov 1964)
 - UR Unitatis redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism, Nov 21, 1964)
 - CD Christus Dominus
(Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, Oct 28, 1965)
 - PC Perfectae caritatis
(Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, Oct 28, 1965)
 - OT Optatam totius (Decree on the Training of Priests, Oct 28, 1965)
 - GE Gravissimum educationis (Declaration on Christian Education, Oct 28, 1965)
 - NA Nostra aetate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to
Non-Christian Religions, Oct 28, 1965)
 - DV Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Nov 18, 1965)
 - AA Apostolicam actuositatem (Decree on Apostolate of Lay People, Nov 1965)
 - DH Dignitatis humanae (Declaration on Religious Liberty, Dec 7, 1965)
 - AG Ad gentes divinitus (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Dec 1965)
 - PO Presbyterorum ordinis (Decree on the ministry and Life of Priests, Dec 1965)
 - GS Gaudium et spes
(Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Dec 7, 1965)
- CS *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium*
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997
- Confirmation Perfects Baptismal Grace*
Pope John Paul II, General Audience, September 30, 1998
- Confirmation Seals Us With the Gift of the Spirit*
Pope John Paul II, General Audience, October 14, 1998
- CPG *Credo of the People of God*
Pope Paul VI, 1968
- DCN *On the Sacrament of Confirmation (Divinae consortium naturae)*
Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution, 1972
- DD *On Keeping Sunday Holy (Dies Domini)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, May 31, 1998

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- The Dignity of Older People and Their Mission in the Church and in the World*
Pontifical Council for the Laity, October 1, 1998
- DJ *The Church is Necessary for Salvation (Dominus Jesus)*
Declaration Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Sep 05, 2000
- DM *On the Mercy of God (Dives in misericordia)*
Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, 1980
- EE *On the Eucharist In Its Relationship to the Church (Ecclesia de Eucharistica)*
Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, Holy Thursday, April 17, 2003
- EM *On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest (Ecclesiae de mysterio)*
Congregation for Bishops, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Congregation for Legislative Texts, Congregation for the Clergy, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, Pontifical Council for the Laity, August 15, 1997
- EV *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium vitae)*
Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, 1995
- GCD *General Catechetical Directory*
Pope Paul VI, 1971
- HCD *Handing on Christian Doctrine by Teaching (Acerbo Nimis)*
Pope St. Pius X, 1905
- Letter to the Elderly*
Pope John Paul II, October 01, 1999
- MD *The Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Misericordia Dei)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Motu Proprio, Apr 07, 2002
- On Children's First Confession Prior to First Communion (In Quibusdam Ecclesiae Partibus)*, March 31, 1977
Congregation for the Clergy, Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship

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- On Communion for Divorced and Remarried Persons*
Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, June 24, 2000
- PSC *On Better Care for Catechetical Instruction (Provido sane consilio)*
Pope Pius XI, 1935
- RH *On Redemption and the Dignity of the Human Race (Redemptor Hominis)*
Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, March 04, 1979
- RM *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (Redemptoris Missio)*, Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, December 7, 1990
- RP *Reconciliation/Penance in Mission of the Church (Reconciliatio et paenitentia)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, December 02, 1984
- RVM *On The Most Holy Rosary (Rosarium Virginis Mariae)*
Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, October 16, 2002
- Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*
Pontifical council on the Family, 1995
- Urging Confessors to Be Faithful and To Receive Reconciliation*
Pope John Paul II, Papal Address, March 28, 2003
- VS *The Splendor of Truth: Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching (Veritatis Splendor)*
Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, August 1993

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National Documents (alphabetical listing)

Go & Make Disciples

USCC, November 1992

Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials

USCC, Publication 419-8, November 21, 1990

Guidelines for Reception of Communion

NCCB, November 14, 1996 (replaces 1986 version)

In Support of Catechetical Ministry

USCC, June 2000

Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us

USCC, November 1999

To Teach As Jesus Did

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1972

AS OF SUMMER 2003, THIS TEXT IS CURRENTLY IN ITS
SECOND DRAFT FOR REPUBLICATION. CONTACT THE OFFICE
FOR EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Diocesan Documents (by publication date)

TFE *Teaching the Faith: Evangelization*

Catholic Education & Formation Office, Diocese of Fargo, January 2000

SFYS *Send Forth Your Spirit*

Bishop Samuel J. Aquila, August 2002

PGCE *A Parent's Guide to Chastity Education*

Bishop Samuel J. Aquila, December 2002

ECR *Education for Chastity Resource*

Pro-life Office, Diocese of Fargo, December 2002

*Contact the Diocesan Office for copies of diocesan documents.

