

Curriculum Guidelines Catholic Diocese of Fargo

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Theme: God is my Father who knows, loves and cares for me.

I. CREED - PROFESSION OF FAITH

Section one pertains to what God, Our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ His Son by the power of the Holy Spirit has revealed about Himself and His Plan for our salvation and sanctification. The delivery of the Faith begins with the knowledge that God has acted first – He has given all – for no other reason than He loves us.

At the end of Pre-Kindergarten, students will demonstrate the following:

1. God is our Father who loves us and cares for us.
(CCC 301, 303, 305)
2. God made all people and things. We are grateful to God for all the beautiful gifts He has given us.
(CCC 224-225, 338, 341, 357-358, 360-361, 1934)
3. God calls each of us by name and protects us. God made each of us to love Him and to be His child now and always.
(CCC 1, 163, 301, 303, 305, 1023)
4. Jesus is God the Son.
(CCC 443-445, 464-469, 480-482, 470-476)
5. Jesus told us many things about the Kingdom.
(CCC 541-546, 567)
6. Mary is the mother of Jesus. Joseph is the foster father of Jesus.
(CCC 485, 488-495, 497, 509, 723-724)
7. Angels are God's messengers.
(CCC 331-333, 351)
8. Prayer is listening to and talking to God. We are called to pray every day.
(CCC 2559, 2659-2660)
9. Our parents who give us life, love, care and provide for us are a very special gift from God.
(CCC 2215)
10. Playmates and classmates are meant to be our friends. Friends are also gifts from God.
(CCC 1878-1879)
11. Sacred images, statues, saint pictures, crucifix, holy water, and the rosary are reminders of God's presence in our lives.
(CCC 1667-1668, 1674, 2132)

II. SACRAMENTS – CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

Section two pertains to the way God, Our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ His Son by the power of the Holy Spirit continues to make Himself and His Plan for our salvation and sanctification present today. In the sacraments, God touches us and we touch Him – a touch that wholly changes us – we are freed from sin and become His children, members of the Church, His Family. In the sacraments God acts first – He has given all – for no other reason than He loves us. The reception of the sacraments is one way we say “yes” to God.

At the end of Pre-Kindergarten, students will demonstrate the following:

1. We are members of God’s Family, the Church through Baptism. In Baptism we become a Child of God. (CCC 1257, 1265-1266)
2. Be aware that their family, the class, and the parish are part of the God’s Family, the Church.
3. Know the names and meanings of altar articles:
bread, wine, holy water, chalice, paten, candle, altar, and crucifix.
4. Be introduced to liturgical gestures:
genuflection, kneeling, sign of the cross, handshake of peace, folding hands for prayer
5. Be introduced to the liturgical calendar through the liturgical colors and celebrating in the classroom.

III. MORAL DEVELOPMENT – LIFE IN CHRIST

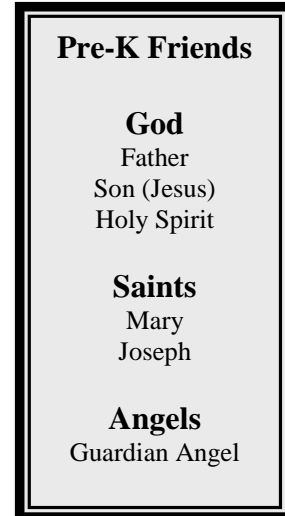
Section three is our response to God who loved us first. As His children, we desire to live as God has asked. The moral life is not an arbitrary list of rules. Living life as God reveals is living a fully human life.

In Pre-Kindergarten, the child should:

1. Have a sense of being loved by the important people in his/her life. Understand how this love relates to how God loves him/her.
2. Be aware that he/she is loved by God.
3. Develop an awareness of his/her relationship with God through stories and songs.
4. Respect others and their belongings.
5. Show a care of God’s living creatures, especially people.
6. Obedience and honor for mother and father.
7. Realize that there are right (good) and wrong (bad) choices. Wrong choices hurt our relationship with God and others. These are called sins. Right choices are the way we love God, others and ourselves. This is how we grow in holiness. This is how we grow as God’s children. We become saints by being good.
8. Desire to be in heaven, that is, desire to be a saint.

SAINTS – PRE-K

1. Know that saints are what we call people who are in God’s family in heaven. God wants everyone to be a saint. We should want to be saints. With God’s help we can be saints too.
2. Know that angels are not saints, they are God’s helpers. Everyone has a guardian angel.
3. Know the following:
 - Jesus’ first family: Father, Jesus (Son), and the Holy Spirit
 - Jesus’ family on earth began with: Mary, Jesus and Joseph (the Holy Family)



IV. PRAYER LIFE

Section four is another way we respond to God who loved us first. As His children, we desire to live as God has asked. In order to know God and His specific plan for our lives, we must take time to pray, that is to talk, listen and be with God and His Family, the Church. Praying is essential for growing as a Child of God in the Family of God. A life without prayer is like a life without breath.

During the Pre-Kindergarten year the child will:

1. Attend Mass on Sunday and holy days of obligation.
2. The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer, yet it is also important to help students savor their meaning. (CCC 2688)
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Grace Before Meals
 - Angel of God
 - Morning Prayer
 - Night Prayer
 - Words of Prayer: Alleluia; Holy, holy, holy; Glory to God; Amen, Thank-you God; I love you God; For my family, Lord hear our prayer
3. Experience prayer through art, gesture, music and song.
4. Participate in spontaneous and silent prayer, alone and with others.
5. Be able to express a sense of wonder and thankfulness to God.
7. Become aware of the Church as a place where God is present in a special way and where different members of God’s Family come together to worship the Lord.
8. Become aware of the priest as a special person who represents Jesus and leads us in prayer.

SCRIPTURE – PRE-K

Be familiar with passages and stories from Scripture, specifically:

(*Parents and catechists may cross reference these Scriptures to the CCC by consulting the Index of Citations, provided in the CCC. Such a cross referencing will assist catechists in applying these Scriptures to the points of the curriculum.)

1. The child knows that the Bible is God's Word.
2. The child is familiar with the following passages and stories:
 - a. Creation - Genesis 1:1-27, 31
 - b. Prayer themes
 - Our Father - Mt. 6:9
 - Let the children come to Me - Mk. 10:14
 - I am always with you - Mt. 28:20
 - Always be thankful - Col. 3:16b-17
 - Make ready the way of the Lord - Lk. 3:4
 - c. Stories from the life of Jesus
 - Nativity – Mt 2:1-12
 - Resurrection – Mk 16:1-13

Profile of a Pre-school Child

Characteristics

Three- and four-year-olds focus on what they experience through the senses, especially what they can feel and move with their hands. “Hands on” work, with concrete objects, is very important.

Order is essential for these young children. The catechists, the routine of the catechetical time, the availability of materials for them to use in the room, and the rules for being together should be consistent.

If order and concrete materials, which meet their developmental needs, are provided, pre-schoolers are able to work with concentration.

These children are learning language very easily at this time in their lives. They love beautiful words so this is a good opportunity to introduce

- vocabulary (such as “paten,” “chalice,” “Jerusalem” and Galilee”)
- prayer words and phrases, which they can use to create their own prayers of praise and thanks
- songs of worship related to the themes of catechesis.

Wonder thrives in young children. They are naturally curious and seek to “know” things with all their senses. They are open to and drawn by both “physical” and “spiritual” wonders, the natural and supernatural.

Faith Development Needs

Pre-schoolers’ capacity to receive and return love is immense. The announcement of God’s love for them and respect for their capacity to love God is essential to their program.

These children are nourished by the very basic, but rich, announcements of our Faith. These are announcements that can be returned to again and again, constantly enriching the relationship between God and the child. They include:

- the birth of Jesus
- the kingdom of God present in creation
- Jesus as the Good Shepherd
- the death and resurrection of Jesus
- the presence of Jesus under the form of bread and wine in the Eucharist
- Jesus as the light of the world
- Baptism as the gift of our receiving the risen life of Christ
- the work of the Holy Spirit at the Incarnation, Eucharist, and Pentecost

Through parables and signs (liturgical colors, gestures), young children are able to move from the visible to the invisible reality, deepening their understanding of God while working with concrete representations of the parables or signs.

Three- and four-year-olds can pray with joy and simplicity. Praise and thanks come naturally to them in short phrases, song, and repetition of words like “Alleluia,” as well as in their art and work with materials.

The joy of pre-schoolers whose relationship with God is both respected and nurtured, is deep and calm. In God they find a love which matches their own love, meets their unique needs, and feeds their wondering hearts and minds.

SOURCE: Office for Catechetics, Diocese of Sioux Falls, 605-988-3770

Implications

Because young children's need for and capacity to love is great, the catechist constantly announces God's love for us (in creation, the Incarnation, etc.) and models God's love for us through an attitude of respect for and service to the children. The catechist also respects the relationship between the child and God by nurturing the relationship without putting expectations on it. A relationship cannot be graded or explained.

The calm, deep joy, which is the fruit of this relationship, should be modeled by a peaceful catechist, and not undermined by "childish" or silly songs, activities, or stories.

Wonder can be nurtured by taking slow and thoughtful time with some wonderful gifts of creation, especially those which aid our understanding of God or the kingdom of God (mustard seeds, pearls, wheat, weeds) and those on which deep understanding of sacramental symbol will rest (water, bread, light).

Because of young children's ability to learn language, the catechist should speak carefully and respectfully without using baby-talk. Difficult liturgical and biblical vocabulary **should be used** after brief explanations. Children will remember new words best if they are associated with an experience of the object in question, i.e. "chalice" should be taught when the children can see and handle a real or model chalice or "tabernacle" and "genuflect" should be taught when the children can see a real tabernacle in the church.

Because young children learn best by self-directed activity, the preparation of the room and materials for the room are very important. The room should have child-sized furniture and shelves, not change too frequently or radically, and be orderly and beautiful.

The materials should be carefully chosen with the following criteria:

- offer the child the means to meditate on one of the themes of the curriculum
- can be used independently after a brief introduction from the catechist
- are sturdy, attractive, and easily moved from shelf to table

In order to foster the prayer life of the child, the catechist needs to have a healthy prayer life.

SOURCE: Office for Catechetics, Diocese of Sioux Falls, 605-988-3770