

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization

Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide



Grades Pre-K to 8

This curriculum looks at the six tasks of catechesis as six key elements of lived Catholic life so as to help young disciples in formation to realize the intimate connection between our Catholic faith and life. These six key elements of Catholic life “constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.” (GDC nos. 85-86; NDC no. 20)

**Archdiocese of Washington
Secretariat of Education
Office for Religious Education
Catholic Schools Office**

August 2010

*Putting adults, youth, and children in communion and intimacy
with Jesus Christ through lifelong catechesis for discipleship in
and through the Catholic Church.*



DONALD WILLIAM WUERL
BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE APOSTOLIC SEE
ARCHBISHOP OF WASHINGTON

DECREE

To the Clergy, Religious and Lay Faithful of the Archdiocese of Washington:


It is my pleasure to approve and promulgate the Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide, *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization*, within the Archdiocese of Washington. The purpose of this Guide is to provide a standard instrument for ensuring that the faith is taught to children in a complete, systematic and consistent way in all parish and Catholic school programs.

This Guide reflects nearly two years of significant work on the part of pastors, parish catechetical leaders, principals, parish and school catechists and archdiocesan staff. In a particular way, I am grateful to the Archdiocesan Religious Education Advisory Board and the archdiocesan staff who dedicated much effort to this project and to those who took the time to share their insights throughout the consultative process.

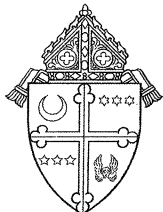
This Guide becomes effective on September 8, 2010, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Full implementation of this Guide will be carried out by July 1, 2011. The alteration and/or interpretation of this Guide is the sole responsibility of the Archbishop of Washington.

It is my hope that this Guide will assist all involved in our parish and Catholic school religious education programs to achieve our goal of forming disciples for the new evangelization by providing to children formation in the Gospel of Christ and our Catholic faith, and helping them to grow in their encounter with the Risen Lord.

Given this nineteenth day of August two thousand and ten in the Archdiocese of Washington.

+ 
Archbishop of Washington


Chancellor



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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August 31, 2010

Vicar General
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Dear Pastors and Leaders in Parish & School Catechesis,

It is my pleasure to announce the promulgation of Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization, the new Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide. The purpose of this guide is to provide a standard instrument for ensuring that the faith is taught in a complete, systematic and consistent way in all parish and Catholic school programs. The standards and indicators clearly state what participants in parish and Catholic elementary school religious education programs should be able to know, to understand and to do at each grade level (pre-K to 8.)

This new guide was developed in response to the requests of pastors, principals, and catechetical leaders at the October 2006 Catechetical Convocation, affirmed in feedback received during parish visitations and annual surveys and solidified in the Archbishop's pastoral letter of September 2008, Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence.

The guide reflects nearly two years of significant work on the part of pastors, parish catechetical leaders, principals, parish and school catechists and archdiocesan staff. In particular, the Archdiocesan Religious Education Advisory Board, the archdiocesan staff who dedicated much effort to this project and those who took the time to share their insights throughout this monumental and historic consultative writing process made this a better resource.

This new Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide will assist all involved in our parish and Catholic School religious education programs to achieve the goal of forming disciples for the new evangelization by providing children formation in Christ's gospel and our Catholic faith and helping them to grow in their encounter with the living Lord.

The guide will be implemented in two phases. First, during the 2010-2011 pastoral year there will be events, workshops and courses offered to orient and prepare catechetical leaders and parish and school catechists to implement the guide. Second, the guide will be fully implemented in our parish and school religious education programs as of July 1, 2011. A complementary assessment has also been developed that will assist in the guide's ongoing implementation.

While this tool was written with children in mind, it also has implications for adults and youth in the Archdiocese. We now have a common language and agreed upon standards for sharing the faith. It will surely be a powerful tool for us in the new evangelization in the Archdiocese of Washington. May it help us all to "go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded us. For behold, he is with us always, until the end of the ages." (Mt. 28:19-20)

With every good wish and prayer, I am

Respectfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization

Acknowledgements

The work of developing *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* is the work of great love and commitment to the mission of the Catholic Church of Washington 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.

- Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, S.T.D. directed the Office for Religious Education and the Office of Catholic Schools to design and complete the manual. Archbishop Wuerl has provided encouragement, guidance and insight to the writing of the manual.
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- The Archdioceses of Chicago and Indianapolis, and the dioceses of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Wilmington and Pittsburgh for permission to build on the firm foundation of their curricula and to use elements of each of their curricula in creating this new Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide.
- Scripture quotations contained herein are adapted from the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, Copyright 1946, 1952, 1971, and the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, Copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Abbreviations

Used in this Introduction and the Curriculum Standards and Indicators:

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
GDC	General Directory for Catechesis
NDC	National Directory for Catechesis

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CT Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in Our Time)
Compendium Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
USCCA United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

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Introduction

Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the ages.” (Mt. 28:19-20)

A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization, this new Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide will be significantly different because it is

- Standards-based
- Tied to its own assessment to promote accountability, and
- Spiral in its approach to scope and sequence.

Before explaining what these new contributions are, it is helpful to explain what this guide is and does.

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization clearly states what those who participate in parish and Catholic elementary school religious education programs should be able to know, understand and do at each grade level based on pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and organized by the six key elements of Catholic life (also known as the six tasks of catechesis) as outlined in the *National Directory for Catechesis*. This practical tool for parish and school catechists establishes a consistent content for the teaching of the faith across the Archdiocese to ensure that future generations of Catholics are well formed and know the truth that Jesus taught us

The implications of this new guide for the teaching of the faith are:

- **Clear expectations** for catechist, participant, family and parish of what knowledge of the faith and what skills and practices of living our faith should be taught, learned and experienced.
- **Greater accountability** for all involved through assessments tied to the expected standards. The indicators themselves will provide catechists with a variety of formal and informal assessment methods which allow the participants to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- **Greater opportunity** for all partners in the catechetical process to return to each topic each year, in spiral fashion, increasing knowledge and enhancing depth of understanding. This also makes catechist preparation and participant/parish involvement easier.

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AIM OF THIS GUIDE

The primary aim of this guide is to support integrated planning and preparations across all sectors of the church, including parishes, schools and families. This will be done as a part of a diocesan-wide effort to strengthen the teaching of the faith for adults, youth and children. It is directed toward the need to prepare the whole local church (not just children) to overcome the current epidemic of ignorance and doubt about the faith.

These guidelines focus on the need for mutual collaboration, communication and consultation. They strive to clarify the rolls, responsibilities and mutual accountabilities needed by pastors, catechetical leaders and all who assist in efforts to put adults, youth and children into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ through life-long catechesis in and through the Catholic Church. These guidelines are focused to help all of parishes and schools as they both revise and plan their future catechetical efforts. Although this first phase of the guide focuses on the formation of children, these standards will also provide a framework for future efforts in the faith formation of youth and adults.

RELIGION CURRICULUM STANDARDS

The chart on the following pages lists the new standards and was developed by the task force to show the strong relationship between the pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the key elements of Catholic Life and the new Archdiocese of Washington Standards.

These standards form the foundation of the curriculum, shaping its direction. As with other types of standards and goals, they are learned and integrated over time. The Religion Curriculum goals invite and challenge the learner to understand the meaning of discipleship and respond to the call of discipleship through full participation in the life of the Church. “The sacred duty and the joy of each succeeding generation of Christian believers have been to hand on the deposit of faith that was first entrusted to the apostles by Christ himself. We have received this gift, the deposit of faith – we have not conceived it. It is the heritage of the whole Church. It is our privilege and our responsibility to preserve the memory of Christ’s words and the words themselves and to teach future generations of believers to carry out all that Christ commanded his apostles.” (NDC no.26)

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Pillars of the Catechism	Key Elements of Catholic Life	New Religion Curriculum Standards (in <i>light of the NDC and USCCA</i>)
Creed - <i>What We Believe</i>	I. Knowledge of Faith	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. (NDC nos. 16C, 25-26) 2. SACRED SCRIPTURE: Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God’s revelation through Sacred Scripture. (NDC nos.18, 24)
Sacraments - <i>How We Celebrate</i>	II. Liturgy and Sacraments	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. (GDC 85, NDC nos.35-36) 4. LITURGY: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the Church Year and celebrated in the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life. (NDC nos. 32-34, 37-39)
Christian Living - <i>How We Live</i>	III. Morality	5. CONSCIENCE: Develop a moral conscience informed by Church teachings.(NDC nos. 20.3, 36B.1-2, 42) 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, conversion, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice, the dignity of the human person and love of neighbor. (NDC nos. 42.44,45,46)
Prayer - <i>How We Pray</i>	IV. Prayer	7. PRAYER: Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer and acknowledge prayer as the primary way we deepen our knowledge of God in the community. (NDC nos. 20, 34,38)

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Pillars of the Catechism	Key Elements of Catholic Life	New Religion Curriculum Standards (in light of the NDC and USCCA)
<p><i>Christian Living</i> - <i>How We Live in the Community, the Church</i></p>	<p>V. Education for Living in the Christian Community</p>	<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. (NDC nos. 25D, 28, 29)</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. (NDC no. 51.A-C)</p> <p>10. CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES AND RELATIONSHIPS: Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations. (NDC nos. 25H, 29, 41-45)</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 (GDC nos. 27, 56, 228, 229, 230, 255, 261; NDC nos. 29C-H, pp. 100-101, 104)</p>
<p><i>Christian Living</i> - <i>How We, as Individuals and Community, Live in Service to</i></p>	<p>VI. Evangelization and Apostolic Life</p>	<p>12. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Know, 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. (NDC nos. 25H, 29A-C,H, 41-46)</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 faith traditions. (NDC nos. 51D-E.52)</p>

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<i>the World</i>		14. MISSIONARY VOCATION: Demonstrate an appreciation for Catholic missionary and evangelization efforts through our parish community, its culture, worship, sacramental life, and service. (NDC nos. 25H,I, 29A-C,G-H, 41-46)
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THE DESIGN OF THE GUIDE

In order for the Religion Curriculum to be implemented well it needs to be viewed as a “learning centered” curriculum: the design is focused on the participant learning process and outcome. Parish and Catholic school catechists plan their instruction around how to effectively help the participant understand and internalize the message. They do this by asking and answering three questions in the order given below.

1. **What is the intended learning?**
(**Outcome/objective:** What should the participants know, understand and be able to do and state as observable behavior? Use an action verb.)

2. **What will I do to help the participants be ready to effectively demonstrate the evidence of their learning?**
(**Strategies:** What teaching and learning activities, resources, field trips, etc. will help me to provide the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the outcome so that the participants will be able to give evidence of the learning asked for in the assessments I have designed?)

3. **What will be the evidence that participants can do it?**
(**Assessment:** What will students do to show me that they acquired and can use the knowledge, skill and understanding of the outcome?)

The Religion Curriculum provides the starting and ending answers for questions 1 and 3. Parish and Catholic school catechists will develop intermediate mastery objectives matching assessments as they teach specific knowledge and skills through the year. The standards and indicators will help them to develop the intermediate strategies.

Standards

As outlined above, 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. The **indicators** directly support learning aspects of the standard at developmentally appropriate times. 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 are measurable and identified for each of the standards. In *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* the indicators describe the basic

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content for each grade level providing the major reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The blue highlighted terms in the outcomes are linked to the Glossary in which the references for the *Catechism* are listed. The references from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults are essential for the parish and school catechist to know for effective student achievement of the indicators.

- **Bold print** indicates core indicators that must be covered in both parish and school programs.
- *Italicized print* indicates that the standard is not core but either introductory or enrichment material that may have already been mentioned elsewhere or may be repeated again so it should only be covered if and when there is sufficient time.

Bloom's Taxonomy

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom found that over 95 % of the test questions students encounter require them to think only at the lowest possible level - the recall of information.

Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain, from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, resulting in the highest order which is classified as evaluation. Blooms language has already been incorporated into the indicators so that it is more evident as to whether one is being introduced to a topic, developing one's understanding of it or being asked to demonstrate and apply how one has integrated what has been learned.

Verb examples that represent intellectual activity on each of his six levels are listed here.

1. **Knowledge:** define, list, memorize, name, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, and state.
2. **Comprehension:** describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, and review.
3. **Application:** apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, illustrate, interpret, practice, schedule, use, and write.
4. **Analysis:** analyze, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, question, and test.
5. **Synthesis:** compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, organize, plan, prepare, propose, and write.

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6. *Evaluation*: argue, assess, choose, compare, defend, judge, select, support, value, and evaluate.

The verbs used in the indicators were chosen to indicate the increasing depth of understanding and comprehension as expected of participants as they continue through each year in the program from Pre-K to 8th grade.

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WHAT IS MEANT BY STANDARDS BASED CURRICULUM?

In the field of education, a *standard* is a term which defines a cumulative body of knowledge and set of competencies that is the basis for quality education. They express what all program participants should know and be able to do, but do not dictate how they are to be taught.

At the request of the Priest's Council, the Office for Religious Education initiated a process of local church visitations to help parishes and their Catholic schools assess how well the faith is taught to adults, youth and children. Pastors, principals and DRE's began to ask for guidance and direction as to how they could become more effective in the teaching of the faith. Principals of Parish elementary schools pointed out that all education subjects, except religion, were using a standards-based approach.

Since the notion of setting standards is still a new concept in the teaching of faith, it is important to understand the significance of having an Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide based on standards and what the implications are for the teaching of the faith.

Importance of Having Archdiocesan Standards for the Teaching of the Faith:

Setting Archdiocesan standards allows for equal opportunity for all in our parish and Catholic school programs. First, all program participants are compared to the same standards. If there are no common standards and every parish or school catechist sets his or her own standards, those who participate will have different expectations in each program. If there is nothing for parish and Catholic school religious education programs to compare with, both instruction in the faith and assessment cannot be consistent.

Second, when Archdiocesan standards are set, it is clear what everyone in programs should know and be able to do at each level of their faith formation. In addition, when a complimentary assessment is offered by the Archdiocese, each program participant's progress towards attaining the standards can be measured. Those who are not achieving the standards can also be provided with early, effective assistance.

Advantages of Setting Standards: 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.

This can help the different partners involved in the process of teaching the faith: the Archdiocese itself, the catechetical leaders in our parish and Catholic school programs, catechists, program participants and parents or guardians. The following describes how setting standards can help in each of these partners in the process:

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- **The Archdiocese.** For the Archdiocese, standards are a common reference tool and provide a defined framework for an annual assessment. Regular assessment and review of the results will help the archdiocese to plan formation opportunities for leaders and catechists that focus on what is most needed for effective teaching of the faith. This will enhance the Archdiocesan Office for Religious Education in its

mission to put: *adults, youth, and children in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ through lifelong catechesis for discipleship¹ in and through the Catholic Church.* These standards will help to address the need to prepare the whole local church, beyond the religious education of children alone, to overcome the epidemic of ignorance and doubt about the faith.

- **Parish and School Catechetical Leaders.** For parish and Catholic school catechetical leaders the standards provide a focus for developing new ways to organize and implement teaching methods regarding the faith to adults, youth and children as well as evaluate their progress. Group and individual scores from the assessment will enable catechetical leaders to know more clearly what kind of training and support their catechists need.
- **Catechists.** Standards help parish and school catechist to design their sessions and ongoing assessment of progress based on the order of learning importance. Both parish and Catholic school catechists will benefit. Parish catechists will be able to use the standards to determine what in the Catechist's teaching manual should be covered as well as what other resources may be needed to meet the standards not available in the texts. There will be a shift from dependence on the text to greater focus using the standards to help focus what is done during a session. The standards will also enable catechists to make expectations clear to those in the programs. When expectations are clear learning improves.
- **Program Participants.** For those in parish and Catholic school religious education programs standards set clear performance expectations, assisting them in understanding what they need to know and do in order to meet the standards.
- **Parents.** Since standards communicate shared expectations for learning, they allow parents to know how their children are progressing in their faith formation. Clearly defined standards also allow parents to support what is being taught at home. The website for *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* will have parent pages to enable parents to know exactly what is to be covered each year in the program. Other resources will also be available to help families learn more about the faith at an adult level so that

¹ Mission State of the Office for Religious Education – *from the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) no. 426; *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) no. 26

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their role as primary educator or first catechists of their children can be reinforced in a more positive way. Parents will not only know that their children need to learn a prayer, Catholic practice or passage in scripture but will have resources in hand to help them learn together with their children and youth.

The next critical piece in the effort to strengthen the teaching of the faith is assessment. Combined with consistent assessment, families and parishes can better understand what they can do to strengthen the teaching of the standards as presented in the curriculum.

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WHY IS ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

Many people don't believe that one should or can assess religious education efforts. It may be more proper to say that one can not assess faith. What can be assessed is how well one has learned the language, practices and general knowledge of the faith tradition. In Catholic schools, where children receive a grade in 'religion', it is particularly important that the parents and students understand that the grade reflects an attempt to measure knowledge of the faith.

As part of our partnership with the family, parish and Catholic school religious education programs need to be accountable to the parents of those who are enrolled. Those who participate in the programs should also be able to know how well they have learned the language, practices and general knowledge of their Roman Catholic faith tradition. Catechists, too, should have the opportunity to know how effective their efforts in transmitting the faith are in addition to what opportunities are available to help them to grow.

Ongoing assessment also encourages life-long faith formation and identifies areas of growth needed for individuals, catechists, their catechetical leaders and the programs themselves. *It's important to remember that no one graduates from religious education; instead, they participate in a process that continues throughout life.*

WHY HAVE OUR OWN ARCHDIOCESAN ASSESSMENT?

Standards require a change in both teaching and assessment. Standards and assessments are intertwined and need to be integral parts of the religious education curriculum.

In traditional curricula, content matter that participants are expected to know is determined. It follows that the purpose of assessment is to see if the participants have learned the specific knowledge indicated in the curriculum. Recent approaches to how participants learn have changed. Assessment is no longer seen as testing participants on an accumulation of isolated facts and skills, but emphasizes the application and use of knowledge.

Standards-based assessment does not focus on comparing participants' performance to each other (norm-reference assessment). Instead, participants are assessed against a standard (criterion-referenced assessment). This shift to standards-based assessment helps create 'a culture of success, where all can achieve an agreed upon acceptable level. This stands in contrast to the variation in participants learning as expected in the bell-shaped distribution of grades in more traditional ways of assessing other subjects.

In a standards-based curriculum, assessment is viewed not only as a final product (summative), but also as a continual process (formative) that provides participants performance data to catechists and participants regarding their progress towards

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achieving the standards. The curriculum sets benchmark levels of participants' achievement and

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progress towards meeting the standards by describing what they should know able be able to do as they are formed in the faith. Therefore, it is necessary to move beyond assessment methods which concentrate on memory, and develop those which measure understanding and application.

In order to assess if participants have achieved the different benchmarks, they are expected to demonstrate what they can **do** with the language of faith by applying **what they know** about the faith to real-life situations. Assessing their performance focuses on their ability to actively use the language of faith, and this can be accomplished by using performance assessment methods. With clearly defined standards catechists will now be able to plan their sessions more effectively.

These standards, indicators and resources provide catechists, participants and parents with useful information about their performance towards attaining the standards.

Parish and Catholic school religious education programs will have to change the present method of teaching the faith and now be able to report progress to parents and participants alike. When working with a standards-based curriculum, parish and Catholic schools will be able to see and report participants' progress towards achieving the standards by indicating the specific benchmarks they have achieved. The ultimate judgment on the value of the standards must be whether their use in the parish and Catholic school sessions actually improves program participants' knowledge and skills.

Assessment provides the information necessary to guide catechists in determining both their progress and the progress of their participants in attaining the standards, as specified in the curriculum. Catechists, parish and Catholic school religious education programs together with the Archdiocese are accountable for participants learning based on the attainment of these standards. Since this particular criterion provides a clear and defined framework for assessment, it will be possible to ascertain the extent to which the standards have been met.

WHAT IS A “SPIRAL SCOPE AND SEQUENCE?”

Scope and sequence is the organized framework, the system under which the catechist presents the teachings of the faith to a learner. This framework follows a certain sequence of ideas, one after the other that stays within a certain scope of topics and themes. By giving it this order, a learner has a better chance of getting it all right!

A spiral scope and sequence is one in which the learner returns to each topic each year, in spiral fashion, always in age appropriate language and teaching methods. By using a spiral, all the students in a single parish or school can be studying the same theme at the same time, making catechist preparation, parent involvement, intergenerational learning and cross cultural teaching much more possible.

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In summary, *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* is:

- Standards-based
- Tied to its own assessment to promote greater accountability, and
- Spiral in its approach to scope and sequence.

AN ANALOGY

An analogy may help users to better understand the significance of the shift that *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* represents: the necessary response to an epidemic.

An Epidemic of Ignorance and Doubt: An epidemic (from Greek *epi* "on or in" + *demos* "people") refers to when new cases of a certain disease, in a given human population, and during a given period, substantially exceed what is "expected," based on recent experience.

Some would say that Catholics are experiencing an epidemic of ignorance and doubt about the Catholic faith. The number of adults, youth and children who are unable to articulate their belief in God and the role of the Church in living their faith continues to increase. This epidemic is so widespread that the focus can no longer be on one generation but needs to systematically look at how the Church teaches the faith and shares it with adults, youth and children across multiple generations.

The approach of this guide represents the kind of significant response needed at this moment in religious education. There are many things done before that may no longer be effective and change is needed in how we approach religious education practice. There is need to focus more on the children, youth and adults in religious education programs and to see textbooks as a tool in teaching the standards rather than a resource to be followed at all costs.

Rationale: Why plan beyond religious education programs for children? Given that the current epidemic has consequences for the whole of the life of the Church, it is essential that all in both parish and Catholic school religious education programs plan to address the disruption that this ignorance and doubt cause by focusing on the:

- Importance of participating in the Eucharist each Sunday
- Full consequences of what we mean by the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage and human sexuality
- Consequences of the social teaching of the church
- Role of the Church in continuing the ministry of Jesus and
- Intimate connection between faith and life.

During the parish visitations and consultations of the Office for Religious Education, it has become clear that many parish and Catholic school programs are good. At the

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same time, many have requested help to becoming better. To so do, a more focused effort is needed.

This involves more intentional comprehensive and systematic efforts to strengthen the teaching of the faith. This guide, together with the standards, offer a major resource to help all of the partners in these Archdiocesan-wide efforts to move from good to great teaching of faith. Such great and effective catechesis is best done when everyone involved has clear roles and expectations.

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EXPECTATIONS OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A ROLE IN EFFECTIVE CATECHESIS

Parents Are The Primary Educators: Parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith and are the first people to teach their children about faith (NDC no. 101). Parents contribute to the spiritual growth of their children by nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of their children. At baptism, the parish community promises to assist parents in this role (GDC no. 221). Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discuss their vocation as children of God (CCC no. 2226).

The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect....It is deepened all the more when parents comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it. (GDC no. 226 and CT no. 68)

The family is the first place where faith is learned, lived, and interpreted (GDC nos. 226-27). The religious behavior of the parents, whatever it may be, can be called an accurate predictor of religious performance of children. The *National Catechetical Directory* tells us that "parents catechize informally but powerfully by example and instruction" (NCD no. 212) and that "though the influence of peers and of adult catechists is important, catechetical programs are not intended to supplant parents as the primary educators of their children" (NCD no. 229).

The Parish Provides The Context: The parish community, in its turn, assists parents in their role as primary catechists, especially through liturgical celebrations and a program of systematic catechesis (GDC no. 221). The catechism states that "the parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for catechesis of children and parents" (CCC 2226). By celebrating the sacraments with their children, parents are already teaching their children not just knowledge about the faith, but lived experience of the faith. The parish is "the living and permanent environment for growth in the faith" (GDC no. 158)

The Christian community is the origin, locus and goal of catechesis. Proclamation of the Gospel always begins with the Christian community and invites to conversion and the following of Christ. (GDC no. 254)

When families work together with the parish, the formation of their children is enriched. These two sources, families and parish, have appropriate roles and responsibilities in complementary ways; together they form a partnership in the responsibility for forming children. In this way parishes become schools of discipleship preparing people to live their faith fully and share their faith freely. In this light, parents should be made aware of and asked to participate in teaching these standards, thereby enriching their own faith through the process of catechizing their children.

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Everyone Involved has Responsibilities: Since effective catechesis is done best in partnership by all who have roles and with clear expectations of the partners the following is a list of the expectations of all involved.

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Program Participants:

- ✓ Exhibit their willingness to learn through active participation in the learning environment.
- ✓ Collaborate with catechists and peers.
- ✓ Show evidence of literacy and proficiency in the catechetical message and its application to daily life.
- ✓ Come to know how Jesus Christ is central to their lives.
- ✓ Show earnestness in preparation for active participation in the life of the Catholic Church.
- ✓ Show evidence of moral decision-making and critical thinking.
- ✓ Demonstrate understanding and application of Catholic social teaching to current societal situations.
- ✓ Articulate Christian virtues as applied to personal decision-making and behaviors.
- ✓ Show understanding that they are loved by God, are created for union with God, and are of inestimable value before the Creator.
- ✓ Exhibit spiritual growth through prayer, sacramental participation, maturing understanding of Christian discipleship and stewardship.
- ✓ Respect and appreciate the cultural and religious heritage of all people no matter the race, ethnicity or religious identity of the person.
- ✓ Exhibit understanding of their relationship with the Triune God and their ultimate destiny with their Creator.

Parish and School Catechists:

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catechist powerfully influence those being catechized by their faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transparent example of their Christian lives.(GDC no. 29A)

- ✓ Meet the diverse needs of participants through differentiated instruction approaching the catechetical message with various strategies that will help participants to learn.
- ✓ Utilize a variety of catechetical resources and assessments in order to help the student learn optimally.
- ✓ Use technology and other appropriate instruments that enhance the learning process.
- ✓ Provide for varied learning situations that include various grouping methods, peer leadership, and cross-curricular methods to integrate the learning process.
- ✓ Be fully informed of the catechetical content.
- ✓ Inform and involve parents in the catechesis of their participants through understanding of the curriculum, assessment and reporting.
- ✓ Participate in ongoing professional development.
- ✓ Pursue initial and ongoing certification as catechists in the Archdiocese of Washington.

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- ✓ Participate fully in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.
- ✓ Attend to their own spiritual lives through reflection, prayer and reading of scriptures.

Parents and/or guardians:

"The most important task of the catechesis of children is to provide, through the witness of adults, an environment in which young people can grow in faith." (NDC no. 205)

- ✓ Witness and teach the faith to their children as primary educators.
- ✓ Maintain their homes as "domestic" churches wherein relationship with God is evident and participation in parish life is promoted.
- ✓ Esteem their children, seeing in each the face of Christ.
- ✓ Witness their own relationship with God in their love for their children as the outcome of God's love.
- ✓ Be actively involved in the life of the Church through participation in Sunday liturgies, the sacramental life of the Church, the community life of the parish and stewardship.
- ✓ Help their children to respond to the vocation God calls them to in the life of the Church and society.
- ✓ Be socially aware promoting the dignity of human life and nonviolence in the home and in the culture.
- ✓ Educate their children in the sanctity of human life and sexuality.
- ✓ Collaborate with catechists and teachers by promoting and assessing the development of faith in their children.
- ✓ Prepare their children for their participation in the sacraments.
- ✓ Attend to their own spiritual lives through reflection, prayer and reading of Scriptures.

Pastors and parish catechetical leaders:

Pastors should remember that, in helping parents and educators to fulfill their mission well, it is the Church who is being built up. Moreover this is an excellent occasion for adult catechesis. (GDC no. 79)

- ✓ Develop and implement a total parish plan for catechesis encompassing the catechetical needs of adults, youth and children.
- ✓ Ensure that suitable time is given to catechesis in parish and school programs for adults, youth and children.
- ✓ Assure that catechetical formation is available for all language groups and members with special needs.
- ✓ Provide for a vital catechumenate that serves as an organizing component for the organization of catechesis in the parish.
- ✓ Oversee the implementation of the Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide of the Archdiocese of Washington.

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- ✓ Collaborate with the Archdiocese in the certification requirements for catechetical leaders and catechists including Catholic school principals and teachers.
- ✓ Support parents in the faith education of their children especially through good liturgies, meaningful homilies, pastoral counseling, guidance and prayer.

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- ✓ Engage families in preparing children for sacramental participation.
- ✓ Witness one's own faith through personal spiritual development, skill as a liturgical presider, integrity of life and participation in the Church's mission to the world.
- ✓ Employ qualified and skilled catechetical leaders who can directly implement effective programs.

Archdiocesan Leadership will:

- ✓ Utilize resources at the central level to accomplish responsibilities for the total catechetical mission of the local church.
- ✓ Collaborate with pastors in establishing effective catechetical ministry at all levels.
- ✓ Provide for the professional development of catechetical leaders and parish and school catechists
- ✓ Develop and administer certification guidelines and programs that promote effective catechetical leadership in parishes and schools.
- ✓ Research resources to assist parish and school catechists in effectively teaching the Religion Curriculum Guide of the Archdiocese of Washington.
- ✓ Assist catechetical leaders, parish and school catechists in developing a deepening spirituality that strengthens their commitment to their vocation as ministers of the word.

CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION

“Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways.” (GDC no.105)

The parish community is the “primary experience of the Church” for most Catholics. (GDC no. 158, NDC, no. 60) As such, the parish is the primary locus for the entire catechetical enterprise. “The parish energizes the faithful to carry out Christ’s mission by providing spiritual, moral, and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners.” (NDC no.60)

Given its location in the ministry of the word, parishes should have a strategic catechetical plan that integrates all the efforts of the parish at forming adults, youth and children through life-long catechesis for discipleship and meets the specific needs of all its members. The entire parish staff, including the catechetical leader of the school, has a role in achieving the goals of this important task in both planning and orchestrating the catechetical process and providing valuable resources. The pastor takes the leadership role in choosing skilled and effective ministers of the word. (NDC no. 61)

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Catechists in parish programs of adults, youth and children have the privilege of serving the parish as witnesses and teachers of the faith from “womb to tomb.” Most especially catechists teach young people how their lives are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. By growing in the life of faith and teaching skill, they “echo the teaching” of the Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, entrusted to the teaching office of the Church so the Church may fulfill its mission on earth. Catechists engage in one of the most ancient ministries of the Church: the ministry of the word.

In Catholic schools, no matter the subject, teachers have the opportunity to catechize by infusing the message of the Gospel throughout all aspects of the educational process. Whether teaching the sciences, history, art, or physical education: each subject area provides a venue for opening the eyes of faith. Catholic teachers have a unique role as catechists because they have the privilege of working with students throughout the week and over many years of education. They have the opportunity to “teach as Jesus did” in a setting that creates the learning community within the context of faith. (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, 1972)

The *National Directory for Catechesis* further states the following about catechesis in the Catholic schools.

“The Catholic school affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with its daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the Gospel message; for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church; for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence, and love of the Liturgy; for building community; for prayer; for proper formation of conscience; for development of virtue; and for participating in Christian service. In addition, Catholic schools strive to relate all the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life – science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth. For these reasons, whenever possible, parents should send their children to a Catholic school.” (NDC no.9d)

CONTACT EXPECTATIONS

“Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church’s life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her inner growth and correspondence with God’s plan depend essentially on catechesis.” (CCC 7)

Faith is primarily formed within the family, with parish and school religious education programs supporting families by providing programs of systematic catechesis according to the following guidelines:

For Parish Religious Education Programs

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For parish programs of religious education, the **minimum** requirement is 30 hours of catechesis per program year for Preschool through Eighth grade levels.

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For Catholic Schools Religious Education Programs

The **minimum** expectation for the teaching of this religion curriculum in a Catholic school is 100 minutes per week for Preschool and Primary, 150 minutes per week for Intermediate, 180 minutes per week for Junior High. Note: Convocations/special events should **not** replace the religion classes.

The very important elements of worship experiences, service opportunities and family-centered sacramental catechesis are considered essential additions or enhancements to these expectations.

EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

This curriculum can and should be adapted via accommodations and/or modifications for persons with disabilities. These adaptations will be based on the learning needs of the participants and may include (but are not limited to) opportunities for access to specialized instruction, specialized materials, or materials designed for the persons' developmental, not chronological, age. In order to obtain more information and support for this process, please contact:

Department of Special Needs Ministries
Office for Religious Education
Catholic Schools Office – Director of Special Education

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization also provides other useful tools for the parish and school catechist. The table of contents list some of the tools provided with this guide in the form of appendices, the Catechist Companion to the Guide and Catechetical Leaders Companion to the Guide. Additional materials will be made available on the Archdiocesan website to assist all who wish to help in this effort to strengthen the teaching of the faith.

The catechetical framework as developed in *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* provides a systematic approach to catechesis that incorporates multiple mechanisms to make learning the objectives easier.

It is to be noted that all of the core indicators are critical or important for mastery because the glossary terms used in those outcomes are basic to teaching the faith.

All of the components of the Guide outline what is needed for effective catechesis. It is hoped that each of the components will help parish and Catholic school catechists to have the common language of faith needed for effective catechesis in this local church.

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For all who will help to implement these new standards the words of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict when he was in Washington in 2008² provide encouragement, advice and a blessing:

To all of you I say: bear witness to hope. Nourish your witness with prayer. Account for the hope that characterizes your lives (cf. 1 Pet 3:15) by living the truth which you propose to your students. Help them to know and love the One you have encountered, whose truth and goodness you have experienced with joy. With Saint Augustine, let us say: "we who speak and you who listen acknowledge ourselves as fellow disciples of a single teacher" (Sermons, 23:2). With these sentiments of communion, I gladly impart to you, your colleagues and students, and to your families, my Apostolic Blessing.

² Message to Catholic Educators of the United States on April 17 at Catholic University of America.

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HOW TO READ THE FOLLOWING CHARTS

1. There are six key elements in this guide; each element is a section of the Guide:
 - I. Knowledge of Faith – *What We Believe*
 - II. Liturgy and Sacraments - *How We Celebrate*
 - III. Morality - *How We Live*
 - IV. Prayer - *How We Pray*
 - V. Education for Living in the Christian Community - *How We Live in the Community the Church*
 - VI. Evangelization and Apostolic Life - *How We, as Individuals and Community Live in Service to the World*
2. Each of the six elements/sections includes one or more standards; there are fourteen standards in all. Please refer to the Chart of Standards as a ready reference.
3. Within each element/section indicators are provided for each standard; the indicators are provided for each grade level, beginning with Pre-K and going up through Grade 8.
4. **Bold print** indicates core indicators that must be covered in both parish and school programs.
5. *Italicized print* indicates that the standard is not core but either introductory or enrichment material that may have already been mentioned elsewhere or may

Example:

	Key Element VI: Evangelization and Apostolic Life
	Standard 12
	CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Know 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.
	<u><i>Indicators</i></u>
1.12.01	State that Jesus shows us how to live
1.12.02	<i>Understand that we care for the poor and the suffering</i>

- The Key Element is listed at the top. This example is from Element VI *Evangelization and Apostolic Life*
- The Standard is 12 Catholic Social Teaching. All 14 standards repeat in every grade level.
- The numbers to the left of each chart indicate first the grade, then the standard, then the indicator, for example...1.12.01 means: Grade 1, Standard 12 and indicator 1.

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- be repeated again so it should only be covered if and when there is sufficient time.

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Appendices

Appendix #1: “General Schedule For Teaching/Learning Practices And Prayers For Catholics”

Appendix #2: “Key Practices and Prayers For Catholics”

The following materials will be provided in a separate *Catechetical Leaders Companion* booklet to the Guide:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Catechesis within the Context of Evangelization
- Catechetical and Theological Elements
- History and Rationale of This Guide
- More on the Six Key Elements of a Catholic Life
- The Family and Parish Partnership
- Choosing Textbooks
- Children’s Catechesis (Parish/School) Observation Form

The following materials will be provided in a separate *Catechist Companion* booklet to the Guide:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Basics Of Lesson Planning
- Assessment and Religious Education
- Catechist Self -Inventory
- Terms To Know

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- Key People And Places Of The Old And New Testament
- Religious Sites To Visit In Our Area
- Saints Who Lived Nearby

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In addition the following are being developed for a CD and the ADW website page for the curriculum:

- *Parent Pages by Grade* to strengthen the partnership between the parish and the family emphasized in the introductory chapter with that title.
- *Draft Glossary* All underlined words in the guide will be referenced in the glossary.
- *Websites of Interest*- A list of general websites that we find to be helpful in implementing this curriculum. Some specific sites will be listed and linked at the special curriculum webpage and listed with those particular standards that they may help to teach.
- *Catechist Check List By Grade Level*- To assist parish and school catechists in determining a timeline for instruction in the Archdiocesan standards in relation to the textbook they use
- To further strengthen efforts to protect children – all of the lessons for the *Virtus Teaching Touching Safety* program will also be included on the CD and archdiocesan curriculum website.