

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE



PREK - 8TH GRADE

PARISH ELEMENTARY

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The **2014 Parish Elementary Religious Education Standards** are designed to offer a systematic and comprehensive framework for sharing our Catholic faith from Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. These Religious Education Standards offer instructional outcomes based on the Six Tasks of Catechesis to guide the process of faith formation.

“The object of catechesis is communion with Jesus Christ” (*National Directory for Catechesis* [NDC], p. 55). We accomplish this by both sharing the content of our faith – Sacred Scripture and Tradition - and through our personal witness of what it is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. “The catechist must be able to introduce the real person of Jesus Christ to the real persons of this time and place in history” (NDC, p. 40). Thus, we are concerned with both the “what” and the “how” of authentically passing on the treasures of our Catholic faith.

The **Six Tasks of Catechesis** come from the Vatican’s *General Directory for Catechesis* (¶ 85) and include the four sections (pillars) of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC): (I) Knowledge of the Faith; (II) Liturgical Education; (III) Moral Formation; and (IV) Learning to Pray. The first four tasks are the content, the “what” of our Catholic faith. “How” we live out this content is found in the last two tasks: (V) Education for Community Life and (VI) Missionary Discipleship and Service.

All Six Tasks are designed to support one another and thus, we will find overlap among them. They are not taught sequentially and can be thought of us a symphony with multiple musical instruments. These instruments work together and interact in different ways depending upon the grade level emphasis and liturgical season.

We find the “what” in the **Essential Concepts and Grade Level Standards** that are keyed to article numbers from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We also find the “what” in the theme for each grade level. For example, Sixth Grade focuses on the Old Testament. Thus, there is an emphasis on the Essential Concepts of “Revelation,” “Sacred Scripture” and “Salvation History.”

The list of Essential Concepts with their associated *Catechism of the Catholic Church* article numbers is found in the opening section of this document. The **Essential Concepts Grid** section toward the end of the document offers the catechist an overview of the each Essential Concept across all grade levels.

Vocabulary terms for the Religious Education Standards are underlined and in bold format. Definitions for these words can be found in the **Glossary** section that is a resource for catechists. Many of these terms can also be found in the **Student Vocabulary Definitions** section of this document.

Several grade level standards are printed in blue, which indicates they are based on Sacred Scripture. Frequently, certain passages will be specifically referenced for study. Otherwise, the catechist should review the **Scripture list** to find recommended Bible passages.

A new feature of these Religious Education Standards is the incorporation of prayers to know by heart, prayers to experience, and prayer responses for full, active and conscious participation during Mass. Assigned prayers for each grade can be found at the end of Task IV in each group of standards. There is also a separate section that includes an alphabetical list of the prayers with their full text.

Our **Library Media Center** has been and will continue to be developing print and digital media associated with themes taken from the list of *Essential Concepts*. These resources are also set up for various age groups and grade levels: Primary; Intermediate, and Middle School.

The Religious Education Standards describe expectations for student learning. They do not include methodology and need to be supported by other resources for the “how” of teaching them. Of great importance are the **Liturgical Mapping** samples connecting the Religious Education Standards to the Sunday Lectionary Cycle. By bundling and mapping grade level standards according to the Liturgical Calendar, we are able to sequentially cover several outcomes in one class session that also highlight the Sunday Mass readings.

As we move forward with the Religious Education Standards, we will be routinely posting and updating **Additional Resources** to build lesson plans, learning activities, and assessment tools. Our Archdiocesan Catechist Certification Program is highly recommended for catechetical leaders and parish catechists. Participation in this program will prepare them to teach these new standards confidently.

The Office of Catholic Faith Formation will be offering deanery and parish presentations to assist with the implementation of the Religious Education Standards across grade levels. We also will be collaborating with our Religion publishers, who will be correlating their textbooks to our Archdiocesan Standards, and also assisting us with liturgical mapping of them.

The 2014 Parish Elementary Religious Education Standards are a joy and a challenge. They are a gift because they provide a detailed pathway for authentically passing on our faith. They offer us outcome based language we can share with our families. They help us to deepen our understanding of the rich content of the Word of God found in Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. They provide us a platform for creating new methods and approaches for catechesis and evangelization. And they will lead us to prayer, as we must always remember that communication of faith is “an event of grace under the action of the Holy Spirit” (NDC, p. 96) that leads all of us into a deeper and more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ (cf. NDC, p.55).



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Many people contributed to the development of the Parish Elementary Religious Education Standards in the Archdiocese of Seattle. It is our hope that that clergy, pastoral assistants for faith formation, and parish catechists will find these new faith formation standards to be practical guideposts for systematically and comprehensively passing on our Catholic faith across a range of developmental levels. We, the Office of Catholic Faith Formation, thank the following:

- Archbishop Sartain, the Chief Catechist of our Archdiocese, who initiated this revision in partnership with the Office for Catholic Schools, and for his gifts in shepherding all of us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ;
- The many committee members, who shared their time and talents with the content, organization, and editing of this document. Their knowledge and enthusiasm for passing on the rich heritage of our Catholic faith tradition are a great blessing for all of us. Their collaborative work offers us a framework that should guide our catechetical efforts for years to come.

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