

Diocese of Colorado Springs

Essential Curriculum Expectations

For

Religious Education

Eighth Grade

Introduction to Grades 6 – 8

The material covered at the middle school level presumes an understanding by the student of the material covered in a K – 5th grade religious education program and the reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. It is very important that a review of Basic Beliefs of the Faith be done at the beginning of each school year to make sure everyone is on the same page. Attention needs to be given to those students who may not have sufficiently grasped the elementary concepts taught so that they are able to absorb the new material now presented.

This level begins a new phase in the catechesis of our children. It deepens to a more mature level the essential truths they have already been exposed to. While it continues to help the student know their faith, it seeks to help them understand and recognize how their faith connects to their everyday life.

I. Creed – Profession of Faith

This section deals with what God, Our Heavenly Father, has revealed about Himself and His plan for our salvation. This has been revealed through Jesus Christ, His Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The delivery of the Faith begins with the fact that God acted first – He has given us everything for no other reason than that He loves us.

At the end of the school year, Eighth Graders should:

- Know that there is one God, in which there are three Divine Persons. The mystery of the Three Persons in one God is called the Holy Trinity ccc 253
- Know that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior, who came to reveal the Father to us, to teach us how to live and to reopen Heaven to us ccc 461, 259, 259
- Know that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, sent by God the Father and God the Son to dwell within us and help us always to choose what is good and to avoid what is evil ccc 245, 733-36
- Know that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our faith. It is the mystery of God in Himself ccc 249
- Know that the Persons of the Trinity are distinct, but equal ccc 253-55

- Know that the Incarnation is the mystery of God the Son in the flesh. Jesus, who always was, is now and always will be God, became man at the moment of His conception and will always be man ccc 464
- Know that the Ascension is the entry of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain forty days after His resurrection ccc 659-65, 989
- Know that Catholic beliefs and practices are rooted in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition ccc 80-82
- Know that we learn the truth of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition through the guidance of the Magisterium – the Pope and the bishops in union with him ccc 85-87
- Know that God desires that everyone go to Heaven and that He gives us everything we need to get there – but He does not force anyone to go to Heaven ccc 1721
- Know that Heaven is eternal life with God, a state of supreme and unending happiness that fulfills our deepest desires ccc 1023
- Know that Hell is a reality and that those who die in unrepented mortal sin go there. The principal punishment of Hell is the pain of loss, which is eternal separation from God, in Whom is all happiness. ccc 1033-37
- Know of the courage and faith of the Blessed Virgin Mary and use her life as an example of what our faith should be ccc 494
- Know that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary refers to her being taken up by God, body and soul into heaven at the end of the earthly life. Her Assumption is a foreshadowing of the resurrection and glorification of all who die in God's grace ccc 966

II. Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

This section deals with 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 present today. In the Sacraments, God touches us and we touch Him. This touch changes us in that we are freed from sin and become His children. God has given us everything simply because He loves us. The reception of the Sacraments is one way we say “yes” to God.

At the end of the school year, Eighth Graders should:

- Know that Jesus instituted the Eucharist, His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity which is the source and summit of Catholic life, worship and unity.
- Know the principal parts of the Mass, participate fully every Sunday and be encouraged to be altar servers, proclaimers of the Word and hospitality ministers.
- Know that anyone who desires to receive Holy Communion must be in a state of grace and fast from food and drink for at least one hour prior to its reception ccc 1415
- Know that Catholics have a serious obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, the Lord's day ccc 2181-85
- Know that Catholics have an obligation to attend Mass on prescribed Holy Days. Students should know the names and dates of the Holy Days celebrated in the United States.
- Know that the Sacraments strengthen our faith and ability to live as Jesus taught ccc 1123, 1134
- Know that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – RCIA – is the formation process for those who wish to become members of the Catholic Church
- Know that the Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens/completes/perfects the graces imparted by Baptism ccc 1285, 1303
- Know that throughout history God's providential grace and love have guided the Church during times of conflict and difficulty, including the Great Schism, the Protestant Reformation and more recent scandals.
- Recognize the importance of the missionary activity of religious orders in the growth of the Church ccc 927

III. Moral Development – Life in Christ

This section deals with our response to God's love for us. As His children, we want to live as Jesus taught us.

At the end of the school year, Eighth Graders should:

- Know that we are made in the image and likeness of God with intellect and will and that God wants us – but does not force us – to live in communion with Him ccc 1934
- Know that sin is any intentional thought, word, deed or omission that breaks one of God's laws.

- Know that a venial sin does not destroy the life of grace in the soul, but that a mortal sin does ccc1855, 1861-63
- Know the three conditions for a sin to be mortal:
 1. The matter must be serious ccc 1858
 2. You must know the sin is serious ccc 1859
 3. You must freely choose to commit it anyway ccc 1859
- Know that the occasions of sin are any person, place or thing that might easily lead us to sin ccc 1853
- Know that God's Sanctifying Grace is how we share in His life – it is what makes us holy ccc 2023-24
- Know that salvation was earned for us by Jesus in the Paschal Mystery ccc 1067
- Be familiar with the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity ccc 1812-29
- Understand the importance and need for the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance ccc 1458
- Understand that the frequent reception of Holy Communion is the primary source of the grace needed to faithfully live our life ccc 1392
- Understand that we are all called to be holy and that the lives of the saints are examples for us ccc 1479
- Know that there is a natural moral law that binds all human beings and that some things are always objectively evil (murder, rape, etc.) ccc 1954
- Know what the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are ccc 1831
- Know that through the Sacrament of Confirmation we receive special sacramental graces that helps us live our daily lives ccc 1303
- Know that we have an obligation to promote respect for all human life from conception to natural death ccc 2258
- Know that we have a special obligation to help the poor to the extent that we are capable of ccc 2449
- Know what the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are and understand that we are to practice them ccc 2447
- Know what the precepts of the Church are and understand that following them helps us to participate in the life of the parish ccc 2041-43
- Know that sexual desires are good and are given by God to be properly expressed in marriage. In marriage, the husband and wife are called to make a total gift of themselves to each other ccc 1643, 2361

- Understand that sexual acts outside of marriage are a serious sin ccc 2348-59
- Know that faith must be lived through good works ccc 162
- Know that we are to follow Jesus' examples of forgiveness and healing.
- Understand that the Church has a special mission to the poor that is carried out through the activities of local and global organizations.
- Understand the importance of ecumenical cooperation to care for the marginalized of the world

IV. Prayer Life

This section deals with another way we respond to God. As His children we must get to know Him better and spend time talking with and listening to Him. We learn about God by reading the Bible and prayer is essential for growing as a child of God.

At the end of the school year, Eighth Graders should:

- Understand that the Mass is our greatest prayer and the importance of participating in the Sunday Mass regularly ccc 2174-83
- Be familiar with the various expressions of prayer such as, vocal, meditative and contemplative ccc 2700-19
- Be aware of how prayer inspired men and women of faith in the Scriptures ccc 2568-2649
- Know that they should pray for an open and generous response to God's call in their lives.
- Participate in different kinds of prayers and devotions ccc 2258-62
- Pray daily, especially for the protection of all human life from conception to natural death ccc 2258-62
- Know that the Bible is the inspired word of God through which the truths He wanted to teach us are revealed in the authors' own words ccc 102, 105-07, 135
- Know that we learn in Sacred Scripture who God is and who we are in relation to Him ccc 279, 286-290, 205-221
- Know that the Acts of the Apostles describes the foundation of the Catholic Church and the struggles of the first Christians.

- Know that the Letters of St. Paul and the other Apostles apply Christ's message and teachings to the lives and circumstances of early Christian communities from Asia Minor to Rome.
- Know that the Beatitudes are a set of directives for all Christians that build on the commandments ccc 1257, 1700, 1720-22, 1934
- Know that the Spiritual Works of Mercy found in Deuteronomy 15:11, and restated in the Gospel of Matthew, are important examples of love and service to others and we must participate in them to gain eternal life ccc 1473, 2447
- Know that Jesus instituted the Catholic Church and He entrusted to her the authority to teach, govern and sanctify in His name ccc 732, 767, 1076
- Know that Peter was the first Pope and all others are his successors and all Bishops are successors to the Apostles ccc 880-903
- Know that on Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the Disciples in the upper room and the Catholic Church was begun that day ccc 732, 767, 1076, 1287
- Know that the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, also called the Apocalypse, is a poetic and symbolic book that describes situations both in the time of the early Church, as well as at the "consummation of the age." It encourages Christians to embrace the cross, to persevere in truth and charity and to look with faith and hope to the Second Coming of Christ ccc 726, 1832