

Guidelines for Curriculum

Grades 7 and 8

Effective May 22, 2001

The Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education has developed these guidelines in response to requests by pastors, DRE/CREs, parents, and the people of the Diocese of Beaumont.

The formulation of these *Guidelines for Curriculum* for Grades 7-8 follows the model used in the *Guidelines for Curriculum Grades 1-6*, but go further. These guidelines begin to ask parishes to consider catechesis in light of the vision set forth by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops in *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) states “the aim of catechetical activity consists in precisely this: to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith” (66). To begin to help parishes achieve this goal, we have had to ask some questions about the current state of adolescent catechesis. The OLCF/E is presenting these curriculum guidelines in this manner to enable parishes to do adolescent catechesis most effectively.

These guidelines address the “What, Who and How” of adolescent catechesis.

Curriculum Guidelines

What Do We Teach?

- This section sets forth the Faith Themes for Young Adolescents. It is not a comprehensive listing, but a continuation of the catechetical process that the adolescent has experienced during grades one to six.

Appendix

Who Do We Catechize?

- This area focuses on the social and spiritual needs of the young adolescents that we catechize. What are their needs? What do we as catechists need to remember about these young people to be most effective in sharing this message of salvation with them?

How Do We Teach?

- This section gives various models that catechetical programs for young adolescents may follow. The GDC calls us to use contemporary methods in the ways that we catechize youth. These are just some examples of these ways.

Recommended Text Series and Supplemental Resources

- This section lists the various text series that are being recommended for use in parish catechetical programs. In addition to recommended series, this section contains a listing of some of the supplemental resources that parishes may utilize. If a series text or supplemental resource is not listed, please contact the office that we may review the material and add it to the list when appropriate.

Curriculum Guidelines: What Do We Teach?

Quotes from *the General Directory for Catechesis...*

The Magisterium has the duty of 'giving an authentic interpretation of the word of God,' and in doing so fulfills, in the name of Christ, a fundamental ecclesial service. Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium, all three of which are closely connected, are 'each according to its own way,' the principle source of catechesis. (96)

Jesus Christ not only transmits the word of God: he *is* the Word of God. Catechesis is therefore completely tied to him. Thus what must characterize the message transmitted by catechesis is above all, its 'christocentricity.' (98)

The Word of God, incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the Word of the Father who speaks to the world through his Spirit. Jesus constantly refers to the Father, of whom he knows he is the Only Son, and to the Holy Spirit, by whom he knows he is anointed. He is 'the Way' that leads to the innermost mystery of God. The christocentricity of catechesis, in order of its internal dynamic, leads to confession of faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (99)

At the heart of all that we teach is the person of Jesus, Son of God and son of Mary (CCC, 426). Our catechesis reveals who Jesus is – truly God and truly human. If the goal of our catechesis is to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith (GDC, 66) by our young people, then our catechesis must center on Jesus and on the awesome reality of how Jesus leads us into relationship with all three persons in the one Blessed Trinity – Father, Son, and Spirit.

For this catechesis with young adolescents we look to the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. These pillars of *the Profession of Faith, the Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Life in Christ, and Christian Prayer* enable us to share with our young people the awesome and real love of God revealed in Jesus.

Our goal is not to develop a comprehensive listing of all that should or must be taught. Rather, the Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education has set forth faith themes based on these pillars. It is assumed that these young adolescents have already completed grades one through six of the catechetical process. Therefore, this is not a comprehensive listing of eight years of learning and growing, but continues the process that began in the guidelines set forth for grades one to six.

By completion of a two year Young Adolescent Faith Formation Process (usually grades 7 & 8), the young adolescents should have an age appropriate understanding of the following Catholic beliefs and prayers that are based on the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The numbers following each statement are the reference numbers for the corresponding paragraphs from the CCC.

Faith Themes for Young Adolescents

1. Our Faith Believed *Catholic Beliefs*

Young adolescents will develop awareness that the Church has a basic set of beliefs found in the Apostles and Nicene Creed. Some of these doctrines are...

- The desire and knowledge for God is within each human person. (27-30, 74)
- Faith is our human response to God's invitation to be in relationship. By having faith, we trust that God will keep his promises. We live out this relationship by the way we conduct our daily lives. (142-166)
- God's revelation of God's self happened over time and in the course of human history. This revelation had its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. (51-67)
- This divine revelation is passed on to us in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. This revelation is permanent and unchanging. (65-67, 121-130)
- The Sacred Scriptures themselves are a part of our Tradition and are the norm for all tradition. (75-83)
- Catholic understanding of Sacred Scripture is based on the teaching of the Church, not private individual interpretation. (84-95)
- The Nicene Creed expresses the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic Church in regard to the Trinity, Jesus, Mary and the saints, and the Church. (176-175, 185-197)

Holy Trinity

Young adolescents will gain an understanding that our belief in the Holy Trinity sets us apart from other religions. Youth should understand that...

- The Holy Trinity talks about one God in three (3) distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is not one with three parts, but is completely one and completely three. (200-227, 232-260)
- God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. God was never created and always existed. God is the Creator. (279-314)
- God the Son, the Redeemer, is the second person of the Trinity. The Son was not created, but eternally existed with the Father and is equal to the Father. (290-294)
- God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, is the third person of the Trinity. The Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son. This Spirit that we received in Baptism gives us grace, and enables us to share in God's life. (243-248, 253-255)

Jesus Christ

As Catholics, our faith is based on Jesus, Son of Mary and Son of God – fully human and fully divine. Knowing this, students will understand that

- Jesus is also called the Word of God. The Word always existed and already existed at creation. The Word of God was present with God, is God and is distinct from God. (65, 101-104, 241, 422-424, 456-460, 703)
- The incarnation of Jesus is God taking on flesh and becoming human. Belief in the incarnation is central to being a Christian. "The Word became flesh and lived among us." (461-463, 485, 488, 497, 723)
- Jesus' life and teachings call us into a personal relationship with God – Father, Son, and Spirit. (739-741)
- Jesus is our *Redeemer* (401, 616, 622, 679, 1026, 1069, 1235, 1476, 1992), *Savior* (389, 846, 1019, 1359, 1507, 1584, 1741, 1846) and *Lord* (202, 209, 446-451, 455, 668, 669).
- Jesus' Paschal Mystery is the central message of the Gospel. Through his passion, death and resurrection, we experience the new life of God. (571-573, 599-601, 613-614, 624)

Church

Young adolescents will develop an understanding that as Church we are called to be both the "Body of Christ" and the "People of God." Celebrating this Church born on Pentecost students will begin to develop awareness...

- That the *communion of saints* is the Church. It is the Body of Christ and the People of God. It is the Church – past and present – and is always attentive to our prayers. (946-962, 1055, 1331, 2635, 2684)
- There are four distinctive marks of the Catholic Church, which are "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic." (813-865)
- The mission of the Church is to bring the message of Christ to the entire world (Mt. 28:18-20). (6, 730, 738, 768, 782, 873)
- That the Church has been given the deposit of faith, entrusted to the apostles and handed on to the Bishops as their representatives. (2, 858-860, 873, 2068)

2. Our Faith Celebrated

Sacraments

Our Sacraments are celebrations in which Jesus joins the assembled community in liturgical actions that are signs and sources of God's grace. Young adolescents will begin to come to understand...

- The use of sign, symbol, and ritual action in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. (1084, 1123, 1130-1131, 1152)
- The sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. (1212-1419, 1420, 1533)
- The *Rite (Order) of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) as the preparation for adults coming to the Catholic faith. (1233, 1247)

- Conversion as the ongoing process of coming to believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. (160, 545, 981, 1036, 1428, 1991, 2000, 1490, 1848)
- In Baptism we are made members of Christ and members of Christ's body, the Church. In Baptism we are freed from Original Sin and our sins are washed away. (628, 950, 1213-1215, 1227-1228, 1262-1274)
- Confirmation completes what was begun in Baptism. In Confirmation the Spirit – given us in Baptism – is enlivened in a special way. We are incorporated more fully into Christ. (1302-1317)
- The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of our faith. (1324-1327)
- The Eucharist is really and truly the Body and Blood of Christ. The bread and wine are not just symbols of Christ. They have become Christ – body, blood, soul, and divinity. (1088, 1373-1381).
- The Eucharist celebrates the sacrifice Jesus offered once and for all on the Cross. Good Friday is not merely an event of the past. The mystery becomes present in our midst. (1330, 1362-1372)
- The Eucharist is a communal action and a liturgical action. It requires the participation of each and every person present. (1329, 1348, 2042, 2177-2182)
- The Eucharist contains both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. (1088, 1103, 1154-1155, 1346-1349).
- The Sacraments of Healing are Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. (1420-1525)
- The Sacraments of Communion (Holy Orders and Matrimony) are sacraments of service to the community. (1533-1658)

The Church

Our Church's liturgy is our public worship of our Triune God. The word liturgy means the work of the people. Young Adolescents will come to understand...

- That our personal devotions and private prayer are ways to nourish our Christian life. (24, 1676, 2101-2102)
- When we celebrate Liturgy (Mass), Christ is always present in the priest (who acts in the person of Christ), in the assembly, in the Living Word of God (Scripture), and especially in the Eucharist (Christ's Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine). (1084-1090)
- The Sacred Scriptures, interpreted by the Church through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, guide and direct our search to live out the Christian life. (78-83, 95, 97-100, 107-111, 131-133, 141)
- The Old Testament is the story of God's saving acts in his relationship with the people of Israel. (121-123)
- The New Testament is the faith story of Jesus in the lives of the apostles and the early Church. (124-130)
- The Paschal Mystery of Christ, celebrated by Christians every Sunday, is the turning point in salvation history. The Paschal Mystery is the Passover events of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. (1163, 1193, 1343, 1389, 2142, 2175-2183, 2190)
- Because of our Baptism, every Catholic Christian is called to full, active, and intelligent participation in the life of the Church. This means more than just attending Mass, but becoming active in the life, mission, and ministries of the Church. (618, 901-903, 1000, 1002, 1006, 1372, 1388, 1546, 1591, 2182).

The Church Year

Our Church Year calls us various and unique ways into an intimate relationship with our Triune God. Young adolescents will begin to understand that...

- The liturgical year is comprised of the seasons of Advent-Christmas, Lent-Easter, and two periods of Ordinary Time. During these periods, we celebrate various feasts from the life of Christ and from the life of the Church. (1095, 1168-1173)
- During the season of Advent-Christmas, we prepare for and celebrate Jesus' coming. We prepare and celebrate his first coming as a human person in the incarnation, his second is his coming in glory, and finally Jesus' coming into our hearts daily. (522-524, 542, 550, 556, 1040, 1505, 2853).
- Lent is a penitential season of 40 days. It is during this time that catechumens prepare to be initiated into the Church. (540, 1095, 1438)

- The Easter Triduum, meaning 3 days (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday/Easter Vigil) celebrates Christ's passion, death, and resurrection to new life. (1168)
- Because Easter is the most important feast for all Christians, the celebration of Easter lasts 50 days ending with Pentecost. (1168-1171)

3. Our Faith Lived

The Grace of the Holy Spirit (1987-2029)

Grace is a precious and free gift from God. It can not be earned, only received through God's Holy Spirit. Young adolescents will begin to realize...

- That God calls us into goodness – this life of grace.
- That when we share in the life of grace, we are sharing in the love of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- This life of Grace, which is lived in the Spirit, can be stunted or destroyed by the decisions we make or by those we with whom we associate.
- In Christ we have been justified. In the Spirit we are sanctified. It is through this life in Christ and in the Spirit that we are made holy and merit eternal life.

Moral Living, Personal Growth and Decision Making

Decisions to do evil or avoid evil, or to do good or turn away from the good are made every minute of every day. Our personal growth and our growth as a society depends on the each person to making these choices. Young adolescents will begin to develop...

- An understanding of the concept of a free will. (301, 311, 357, 396, 1730)
- An understanding that Christian morality has been revealed by God. (36, 38, 1960)
- An awareness that our free will and our intellect make us responsible for our actions and attitudes. (1751, 1781)
- An awareness that sin can damage and/or destroys our relationship with God, others, and our self. (705, 761, 1472, 2094)
- An understanding of the nature and effects of social sin. (1868-1869)
- An understanding of the concept of conscience and what it means to have an informed conscience. (1776-1802, 1907, 2106, 2242, 2256)
- An understanding of the theological and moral virtues as habits or behaviors for living the Christian life in the decision making process. (1804-1829, 1830, 1840-1842, 2090)
- Awareness that the basic precepts of the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments focus our lives on living as Jesus lived. (562, 915, 1693, 1816, 1823, 2262, 2347, 2427)

Relationships & Sexuality

A disciple of Christ knows who Jesus is in heart and mind. In being a disciple, we are called to commit ourselves to a life of a disciple through the way we treat others and ourselves. Young adolescents will begin to understand that...

- Living the Christian life calls us to a deep and profound respect for others. (369, 1700, 1703, 2203-2206, 2334, 2393)
- The first three commandments (of the Ten Commandments) call us into a relationship of loving, trusting, honor, reverencing, and respecting our Creator. (2083-2195)
- Stewardship is managing and caring for one's own or another's property. This includes having a healthy respect for one's own body and sexuality. (2362, 2332-2333)
- Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human person. (1604, 2331, 2392)
- Sexuality is a gift from God. It is the way we live as both men and women. (369-373, 1605, 2332-2333, 2362)
- Sexual intimacy is intended by God to be a source of joy and pleasure, which is reserved for married women and men as a sign of their love and spiritual communion. (2360-2363)
- Abstinence, chastity and celibacy are all ways of living out the gift of your sexuality. (2337, 2395)
- Abstaining from sexual intercourse until you have celebrated your commitment in the sacrament of Matrimony shows that you value your intimate relationship with God. (2335, 2360-2363)
- Celibacy is choosing to abstain from sexual intercourse as a way of life. (915, 1658, 2349)

- Chastity is more than not just having sex. Chastity is expressed most notably in our friendships. It is the virtue that helps a person express sexuality appropriately according to his or her vocation. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendships represent a great good for all. Chastity is faithfulness in these friendships/relationships. (2337, 2395, 2522)
- The way in which we live (physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually) as gendered persons, male or female, is our sexuality. Sexuality affects all aspects of the person. (2332)
- Sexual orientation is a person's feelings or attraction toward another person. Sexual Orientation is separate from sexual activity. The Church does not judge sexual orientation as sinful but condemns any sexual activity outside of sacramental marriage. [2348-2350, 2359. Cf. *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers* (United States Catholic Conference, Statement of the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family), published October 1, 1997, *To Live in Christ Jesus*, (United States Catholic Conference), published 1976.]
- Sins against chastity, sexual activity outside of sacramental marriage, are mortal sins. (2351-2359)

Dignity of the Human Person, Social Justice and Service

Every person is created in the image and likeness of God. This being the case, all life is sacred. Young adolescents will come to understand...

- That every person is created in the image of God. (225, 355-356, 934, 1700, 1730)
- Human persons are created to share their life with God and others. We do this by living the living the Great Commandment. In doing this we work toward achieving the common good for all persons. (1700-1876)
- Stewardship is the responsible care for creation and other gifts from God. (299, 343, 2402, 2452)
- Justice is not just a decision to do good, rather it is an absolute moral requirement. (909, 1716-1717, 1787, 1807)
- The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are the basis for all Social Justice and Service. (1928, 1931, 2447)
- Social sin leads to injustice. Justice is the basic virtue that guides our relationship with all people. (1868-1869)
- Our Baptism calls us, as Christians, to a life of serving others. (1266-1270)

Lifestyles and Vocation

When we were baptized, we received the call to live as Disciples of Christ. This call continues in the life choices that we make as adults. You people will come to understand that...

- Every person has a vocation to love. (1604, 2331, 2392)
- Whether a person is married, a priest or religious, or single, s/he is called to a life of loving God, others, and self. (30, 863, 1699, 1878, 1905, 2472)
- The Sacraments of Holy Matrimony and Holy Orders are sacraments of service to the wider Catholic Christian community. (1534-1535)
- Matrimony calls a man and a woman to live out their marriage covenant through service and communication with each other for the sake of their children, families, and the wider community. (372, 1534, 1601, 1604-1605, 1638-1642, 2364, 2367, 2378)
- The sacrament of Holy Orders consecrates baptized men as bishops, priests and deacons to serve the Church through teaching, presiding in worship and in governing the Church. (1120, 1142, 1461, 1534, 1548, 1581, 2686)

4. Our Faith Prayed

Forms of Prayer

Prayer is essential to the Christian way of life. It draws us into a deeper and more intimate relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Young adolescents will continue to learn...

- The need for prayer in daily life. (2633, 2743-2744, 2759-60)
- That prayer is how we communicate with God. (1127, 2616, 2737)

- That we pray to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (2616, 2664-2672, 2680, 2779-2785, 2792)
- That there are various forms of prayer – blessing and adoration; petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. (2096-2097, 2626-2628, 2634-2638, 2639-2644, 2647-2649, 2663, 2684)
- That the Liturgy of the Hours, along with Mass (Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist,) and any sacramental celebrations are our public forms of worship in the Church. (1073, 1174-1178, 2655)

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is handed down in our deposit of faith as the prayer that Jesus himself taught the apostles to pray. Young adolescents will continue to grow in their understanding that...

- Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer as the model of all prayer for us as Christians. (2763-2764)
- The Lord's Prayer expresses not only Jesus' intimacy with the Father, but our love relationship with the Father. (2765-2766)
- The Lord's Prayer is a summary of the Gospel message and how we are to live out that Gospel message. (2763)

Young adolescents should know the following prayers and Resources...

- Sign of the Cross
- Lord's Prayer
- Hail Mary
- Prayer to the Trinity
- Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Act of Contrition
- Apostles' Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Ten Commandments
- Beatitudes
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- The Seven Sacraments
 - as well as have an understanding of the rituals and the elements of each sacrament.
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- The Precepts of the Church
- The Great Commandment
- The Outline of the Liturgical Year
- Holy Days of Obligation
 - January 1 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
 - Feast of the Ascension (40 days after Easter/7th Sunday of Easter)
 - August 15 – Assumption of Mary
 - November 1 – All Saints' Day
 - December 8 – Immaculate Conception
 - December 25 – Christmas Day
- The Way of the Cross (Stations)
- The Rosary and each of the Mysteries
- How to read the Bible

Appendix

Who Do We Catechize?

The goal of adolescent catechesis is to move young people to a committed and trusting relationship with God. To do this most effectively, we must understand who they are and the life changes they are experiencing during this time of rapid change and growth. This period of change in their lives is happening quicker than at any other point.¹

The Changes of Early Adolescents...

Physical

- Rapid physical growth
- Begin to develop sexually
- Sensitivity to their physical growth and changes
- Confusion surrounding their rapid sexual development

Cognitive

- Begin to think abstractly
- Begin to think for themselves (critical thought)
- Can be painfully critical of themselves – beginning to define who they are as persons and individuals

Social

- Want to belong to a group (peers)
- Look to parents as major influence in their lives
- Will try out new behaviors to develop social skills
- Need to conform to peers – not to be different
- Trust is an important part of relationships

Identity

- Begin asking, “Who am I? What am I a part of?”
- Want to be considered more mature or adult
- Seek independence
- Identify strongly with values of people who are important to them

Moral

- Make decisions based on what others think: friends, family, peers, church
- Need to be accepted by others for their own self-esteem
- Ability to understand that their behavior has consequences and can influence others

Faith

- Strong desire to be part of the faith community and its service to others
- Are dependent upon the community for the content and shape of their faith life
- Begin to develop their image of who God is and their relationship with God

It is because of these changes or elements in the development of adolescents that the approach to catechesis needs to be different. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops state that the process of early adolescent catechesis should contain the following elements:²

1. Catechesis

¹ Based on information gained from National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NYCYM) website. They take their research from the work of Charles Shelton in *Adolescent Spirituality* (Loyola University Press, 1983), David Elkind’s *All Grown Up and No Place to Go* (Addison-Wesley, 1984) and Anita Farel’s *Early Adolescence and Religion: A Status Study* (Center for Early Adolescence, 1982).

² National Conference of Catholic Bishops, “*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*,” 1997. These are the eight themes and components for a comprehensive youth ministry with adolescents. Ministry with early adolescents may contain more or less of certain components depending on the pastoral need, availability and the maturity level of the young persons.

2. Justice and Service
3. Community Life
4. Prayer and Worship
5. Evangelization
6. Pastoral Care
7. Advocacy
8. Leadership Development.

Those elements or components that seem to work most effectively with young adolescents are Catechesis, Justice and Service, Community Life, and Prayer and Worship.

Catechesis that is most effective with young adolescents is that which connects with their lives and assists them in all that they do to be Church to each other. Early adolescent catechesis should take into consideration all these areas of change in light of the elements stated by the Bishops. If we are seeking as catechists “to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith,” then our goal must be in developing a catechetical approach that is meaningful and relevant to the lives and futures of young adolescents.

How Do We Catechize? Methodology

The Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method. Rather, she discerns contemporary methods ... and uses with liberty ‘everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise’ (Phil 4:8). In short, she assumes those methods which are not contrary to the Gospel and places them at its service....Many charisms of service of the word have given rise to various methodological directions. Hence, the ‘variety of methods is a sign of life and richness’ as well as a demonstration of respect for those to whom catechesis is addressed.... Catechetical methodology has the simple objective of education in the faith.

General Directory for Catechesis (148)

There are a variety of methods used to catechize – not just one. The traditional classroom approach is still a very valid means of teaching/catechizing, but is it the most effective way of catechizing?

In looking at the **how**, **where** and **when** of catechesis we need to examine the methods used, the setup of our classrooms and lesson plans, and the length and times of day that we offer these various catechetical approaches.

The Catechetical Experience

As catechists, parents, priests, directors and coordinators of religious education, we must realize that although we may have been twelve or fourteen years of age, we were never the age of young adolescents today. Their experience is not ours. The experience of early adolescents includes: “e-mail, cable TV, the Internet, cell-phones, MTV, WWF, wine coolers, tattoos, global warming, body piercing, high-priced athletic shoes, latch-key kids, AIDS, and CD and DVD players.” Along with these go the stresses of “criminal activity, environmental concerns, purchasing power, substance abuse, academic and athletic pressures, and victimization.” These young people are leaving childhood earlier and without the skills needed to cope with what is expected of them in adolescence, the same being true for the jump from adolescence to adulthood.³ The GDC says that “the most effective catechesis is that which is given in the context of the wider pastoral care of young people, especially when it addresses the problems affecting their lives.”(184) Catechesis needs to begin to be integrated into the process of a comprehensive ministry to young adolescents at the parish level, enabling young people to make the connection of faith to life and life to faith. In doing so, Jesus truly is at the heart of all catechesis.

When creating a catechetical program for Junior High Youth, it is important to take into consideration eight developmental needs. As catechists and religious educators, we are doing much more than imparting knowledge. We are forming young adolescents in the Catholic faith and are teaching a way of life. Young people need to be affirmed in their faith and allowed to begin to take ownership for it. Recognizing and incorporating the following basic developmental needs allows catechesis to become meaningful to the lives of young people.⁴ These developmental needs are:

1. Physical Activity

Each young adolescent develops differently, some more rapidly than others. Catechetical settings need to provide times for movement, as well as times for relaxation and reflection. Non-competitive physical activities should be properly spaced with time for thinking, writing, reading and other forms of reflection.

2. Competence and Achievement

Early adolescents need to feel successful in what they are doing. It helps them to feel good about themselves when we allow them to demonstrate the various talents and skills that they are developing. The respect of their peers and those whom they admire is vital to their sense of accomplishment or achievement.

3. Self-Definition

Early adolescents need the opportunity to explore their world and their faith. They learn to understand themselves through interacting with others – peers and adults. They come to understand who they are and who they are becoming. They learn how to be adults, members of society, an ethnic group or race, a faith community by having opportunities to interact and test themselves with others. They need the ability to question...to ask why.

4. Creative Expression

Young adolescents need to express what they are thinking and feeling. The problem is that their verbal skills may not have developed to a point that allows them to do so. They do this through the peers they associate with, the music they listen to, the clothes they wear, the artwork or writings that they create. We cannot expect young adolescents to express themselves as adults.

5. Positive Interactions with Peers and Adults

Positive experiences with peers provide the self-assurance that “I am okay as a person.” Likewise such experiences with adults provide the self-assurance that “I am growing up” –

³ Michael Carotta, EdD, Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of Your Adolescent (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2002), pp. 10-11.

⁴ Reynolds, Brian B., Ministry With Early Adolescents, On the Move: Activities for a Year of Early Adolescent Ministry (New Rochelle, NY: Salesian Society, Inc./Don Bosco Multimedia, 1993), pp. 5-8. Reynolds discusses the work of William Kerewsky and Leah Lefstein in the area of young adolescent developmental needs. Each area is summarized from the article. Michael Carotta, EdD., Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of Your Adolescent, pp. 13-17. Although Reynolds lists seven elements, Carotta adds religious experience to the listing of the needs of young adolescents.

"I'm headed in the right direction." We need to praise them for a job well done, and allow their peers to do the same.

6. **Meaningful Participation**

Young adolescents need to participate in the situations and activities that shape their lives – in the decision making process for themselves. They need to be included in, to be listened to, and to be taken seriously in the catechetical process. They cannot simply be by-standers in their own lives.

7. **Structure and Limits**

Young people need a clear set of expectations from adults. The rules cannot constantly be changing. They need to be able to find security in these limits, even when they continue to attempt to renegotiate or test them. The lack of limits lead to greater chaos than already exists.

8. **Religious Experience**

Spiritual experience and spiritual hunger is often much stronger than it was in childhood. The idea of a God that loves them unconditionally, who they can go to under any circumstance, is "*naturally* appealing" to a young adolescent who is constantly bombarded with feelings of love/hate, rejection/acceptance, powerlessness and anxiety.

A parish religious education program that takes into consideration these eight developmental needs of young adolescents will contain some of the following components:

- **Small Faith-Sharing Groups:** Establishing groups of young people of five to eight in number that allows a safe setting for sharing and dealing with life issues. This is very effective in helping the students make the connection between religion and life. These groups can be informal, as well as formal, to allow for a six to eight week mini-course style.
- **Traditional Religious Formation:** This component provides regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings that lend themselves to a systematic program or sequence of classes. The key to successful sessions is an effective adult (catechist) who can use a variety of methods.
- **Youth Group Meetings:** These meetings contain community building, catechesis, prayer, small group sharing/discussion, and creative presentations by catechists, older adolescents, and outside speakers. Effective catechesis can be a strong element of youth meetings.
- **Intergenerational/Family Catechesis:** Catechizing the generations of faith are just as important as catechizing our youth. Families need to grow together in faith. Having the entire parish learning on the same topic or theme can be very effective.
- **Retreats:** A time away to reflect on the mysteries of our faith, to grow in community, and to explore our faith in a deeper, more meaningful way provides adolescents with a lived experience of faith in a communal setting.
- **Service Experiences:** Young people need the chance to live out their faith through hands on experiences with those in need, whether that need be economic or spiritual. It is through such experiences that young people learn what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
- **Diocesan, State or Regional Youth Rallies and Events:** These experiences open young people to the wider or the world wide Church. Junior High Spectacular and Junior High Field Day are two rallies that let the young people know that the Church of Beaumont is alive and that it is much larger than their local parish.
- **Prayer:** Prayer is the essence of our life in Christ. Whether the process is journeying to holy places/churches or inviting students to participate more fully in the parish worship experience, it will enable them to meet Jesus in the sacraments and the community.

Three Potential Models of Junior High Religious Education

A parish developing a comprehensive junior high catechetical program will pick and choose from these components for their parish programs. There is not one model that works for all parishes. Each parish can adapt what works for them. This section contains a set of three possible models for a parish junior high youth catechetical process using some of the above components.

1. Traditional Religious Education Model

- A. Weekly 1¼ to 1½ hour sessions using a standard religious education text.
(See recommended list)
- B. Monthly Junior High Youth Group Meeting (possible schedule for 2 hour meeting might contain)
 - Ice-breaker/action activity (15 minutes)
 - Prayer experience (10 minutes)
 - Activity to approach topic (10 minutes)
 - Catechetical Topic (20 minutes)
 - Large or Small Group Process on Topic (20 minutes)
 - Wrap-up (10 minutes)
 - Activity/Social (30 minutes)
 - Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- C. One seasonal intergenerational/family activities
 - a. Family Advent Evening of Reflection
 - b. Parish Lenten Day of Reflection with youth components
- D. School Break Lock-In Retreat
- E. Lenten Parish Food Collection coordinated by Junior High students and their parents.

2. Mini Course Model

- A. September/October - *Thematic Catechetical Program* for seven weeks meeting for 1½ hours each session. (See Recommended List of Texts.)
- B. Last week in October/First Week November – *Family Celebration of All Saint – or – All Soul’s Day*
- C. Last two weeks of November – Coordination of Giving Tree Service Project by Junior High Students and Parents
- D. January/February – *Thematic Catechetical Program* returns for another seven weeks meeting for 1 ½ hours each session.
- E. Participation in Lenten Lock-In Retreat or Family Day of Prayer to prepare students and families for the Easter Triduum
- F. Participation in the Triduum Liturgies with family reflections or student group projects to be turned in the week following Easter
- G. March/April – *Thematic Catechetical Program* returns for another seven weeks meeting for 1½ hours each session.

3. Lectionary Based Model

- A. Weekly 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minute session breaking open the Word of God. (See Appendix C for recommended list)
- B. Monthly Junior High Youth Group Meeting (2 hour meeting which might contain)
 - Ice-breaker/action activity (15 minutes)
 - Prayer experience (10 minutes)
 - Activity to approach topic (10 minutes)

- Catechetical Topic (20 minutes)
 - Large or Small Group Process of Topic (20 minutes)
 - Wrap-up (10 minutes)
 - Activity/Social (30 minutes)
 - Closing Prayer (5 minutes)
- C. Advent or Lenten Family Activity
Examples:
- Advent Movie Night
 - Lenten Hunger Awareness Activity
- D. Two Service Opportunities during the course of the year
Examples:
- Baby Shower for Birth-Right
 - Ash Wednesday Soup and Bread for Parish
 - Thanksgiving Food Drive
- E. Participation in a day long or Lock-In Retreat Experience

Acceptable/Recommended Text Series **For Grades 7 and 8** **2003-2004**

The Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education is not designating one series to be used throughout the diocese, because we recognize that there is a great diversity in parish Religious Education Programs. Because of this it is important for each parish to determine which of the series best fits its needs. The series listed alphabetically by publishers below are from the major publishing companies. The Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education has designated them as acceptable for use by parish Religious Education Programs, Grades 7 and 8 in the Diocese of Beaumont, because they reflect the norms of these *Guidelines for Curriculum* and the *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades 1-8*, in both content and number of sessions provided.

For the most effective and consistent catechesis for these grade levels, the same series should be used in both grades seven and eight. Publishing companies with qualified consultants and authors have created these programs for young adolescents to meet their needs in both theological content and educational learning styles. **New series or resources added this year are thus marked: .**

Harcourt Religion Publishers (<http://www.harcourtreligion.com>)

These series contain 8-10 lessons per topic. Parish Religious Education Programs should choose two to three topics (depending on length) are to be covered each year. These programs are not designed for the entire series to be completed in a two-year process. They are best used in small groups of 8-15 students and each text contains a thorough age-appropriate treatment of the topic.

Crossroads Series (published 1999)

Series Titles:

- *Apostle's Creed*
- *Church History*
- *Commandments*
- *Discipleship*
- *Jesus in the New Testament*
- *Morality*
- *Old Testament*
- *Prayer*
- *Sacraments*

Living Our Faith (published 2002)

Series Titles:

- *Church: A Community of Faith*
- *Church History: Our Christian Story*
- *God: Revelation and Relationship*
- *Jesus: Word Made Flesh*
- *Morality: Challenges and Choices*
- *Sacraments: Signs of Our Faith*

Resources for Christian Living/RCL (<http://www.faithfirst.com>)

A two-year series based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* containing twenty-four sessions a year with supplemental material on the liturgical year. Each text is designed to be completed in one year.

Faith First (published 2001)

Series Titles:

- *Junior High: Liturgy and Morality*
- *Junior High: Creed and Prayer*

William H. Sadlier, Inc. (<http://www.sadlier.com>)

This series is based on five topics each containing 14-15 lessons. Parish Religious Education Programs should choose two topics to be covered each year. This program is not designed for the entire series to be completed in a two-year process, but students should complete an entire topic before moving on to the next. This series can be used either in small groups or larger classes if needed. Each text contains a thorough age-appropriate treatment of the topic.

Faith and Witness (published 1999)

Series Titles:

- *Church History: A Course on the People of God*
- *Creed: A Course on Catholic Belief – Part I*
- *Creed: A Course on Catholic Belief – Part II*
- *Liturgy and Worship: A Course on Prayer and Sacraments*
- *Morality: A Course on Catholic Worship*
- *New Testament: An Introduction*

Saint Mary's Press (<http://www.smp.org>)

This series contains fourteen topic booklets with six units per topic. Parish Religious Education Programs should choose at least four to five topics to be covered each year. This program is not designed for the entire series to be completed in a two-year process, but students should complete an entire topic before moving on to the next. They are best used in small groups of 8-15 students and each text contains a thorough age-appropriate treatment of the topic. Uses a very active learning style.

Discovering (published 1999)

Series Titles:

- *Becoming Friends*
- *Being Catholic*
- *Celebrating the Eucharist*
- *Dealing with Tough Times*
- *Exploring the Bible*
- *Exploring the Story of Israel*
- *Gathering to Celebrate*
- *Growing Up Sexually*
- *Learning to Communicate*
- *Making Decisions*
- *Meeting Jesus*
- *Praying*
- *Seeking Justice*
- *Understanding Myself*

Benziger Publishing Company (<http://www.glencoe.com/benziger/>)

Come, Follow Me (published 1998)

The grade 7 and 8 texts of this grade 1 to 8 series follows a traditional catechetical format. It is good for a program for traditional weekly catechetical program. *Come, Follow Me* contains 24 lessons for each year, plus supplemental lessons on various catechetical themes.

Silver Burdette Ginn (www.sbgreligion.com)

Blest Are We (published 2004)

A two-year series based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, containing twenty lessons each year with supplemental material on the liturgical year. Each text is designed to be completed in one year.

Titles:

- *Blest Are We: The Story of Jesus* -(Grade Seven)
- *Blest Are We: The Story of Church* (Grade Eight)

Alternative Acceptable Programs for Parishes/Missions for Grades 7-8 2003-2004

The Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education recognizes that some parishes and missions do not have enough children in each grade to use the traditional series in their Religious Education Program. Therefore, we suggest an alternate approach in order to cover the material in these guidelines in an appropriate manner. This approach would combine a lectionary-based program with age appropriate workbooks on the basics of our Catholic faith that would provide for learning together as a larger group, and small group work by grade level. Since the programs are lectionary-based, different material would be covered for each year of the three-year cycle (Cycle A, B, and C.)

The acceptable lectionary-based programs listed in alphabetical order, are:

Harcourt Religion Publishers (<http://www.harcourtreligion.com>)

- **Seasons of Faith** (published 1993)

HI-TIME/Pflaum Publications (<http://www.pflaum.com>)

- **Pflaum Gospel Weeklies: VISIONS** (Published yearly)

Living the Good News (<http://www.livingthegoodnews.com>)

- **On the Edge for Young Teens** (Published in three seasons yearly)

Resource Publications, Inc (<http://www.rpinet.com/>)

- **Celebrating the Lectionary: Youth – ages 11-15** (Published yearly)

Silver Burdette Ginn (www.sbgreligion.com)

- **Living Word, Living Water: Adventurers** (11-14 year olds - published 2000)

Combining lectionary-based material with the following workbooks/worktexts would ensure that the basic elements of our Catholic faith are covered each year:

Loyola Press (<http://www.loyolapress.com/faithformation/>)

- **Knowing Our Catholic Faith: Beliefs and Traditions Worktext** (published 2000)

Resources for Christian Living (1997) (<http://www.faithfirst.com>)

- **Our Catholic Identity: Catechism Workbook** (published 1998)

Remedial Texts for Students in for Grades 7-8 2003-2004

Some students who have been away from a formal catechetical program for more than a year may require some remedial (or catch up) work to effectively participate with the other students in the program. The Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education recommends a separate catechist or parent do this outside of the traditional class time. This would allow students the opportunity to also participate with their peers in the regularly scheduled classes.

The acceptable texts for remedial student work are:

William H. Sadlier, Inc. (<http://www.sadlier.com>)

- **One Faith, One Lord: A Study of Basic Catholic Beliefs**
(published 1994)

Benziger Publishing Company (<http://www.glencoe.com/benziger/>)

- **The Catholic Faith: An Introduction** (published 1997)

Recommended Supplemental Materials 2003-2004

Amodei, Michael. Jump Start: 180 Lessons, Icebreakers, Projects, and Weekend Activities for Junior High (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press), 1998.

Baumgarten, Bruce, Mary Lee Becker, et al. On the Move: Activities for a Year of Early Adolescent Ministry (New Rochelle, NY: Salesian Society/Don Bosco Multimedia), 1993.

Chesto, Kathleen O'Connell. *Family Prayer for Family Times: Traditions, Celebrations and Rituals* (Mystic, CT: Twenty Third Publications), 1999.

_____ . *Why Are the Dandelions Weeds?* (Ligouri MO: Ligouri Publications), 1999.

Calderone-Stewart, Lisa Marie. Prayer Works for Teens: Rock Aloe Plant, Children of God [Book 1] (Winona: Saint Mary's Press), 1997

_____. Prayer Works for Teens: Leaves, Nuts, Four Elements: Earth, Wind, Fire, Water [Book 2] (Winona: Saint Mary's Press), 1997

_____. Prayer Works for Teens: Water, Four Seasons, Ojo de Dios [Book 3] (Winona: Saint Mary's Press), 1997

_____. Prayer Works for Teens: Bread, Puzzles, Ice and Snow [Book 4] (Winona: Saint Mary's Press), 1997

Camara, Helder. *Sister Earth: Creation, Ecology and the Spirit* (London: New City Press), 1995.

Connely, Joan Finn and Geri Braden-Whartenby. One-Day Retreats for Junior High Youth (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press), 1997

Dues, Greg. Why Go to Mass: Reasons and Resources to Motivate Teenagers (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications), 1994.

Ekstrom, Reynolds, Gregory (Dobie) Moser, et al. Real Life: Living My Faith Every Day (Mission Hills, CA:

Benziger Publishing Company), 1996. *Originally written as a religious education program for Jr. High in Magazine format, it can be used as a supplemental resource for various activities or discussions. It contains small group activities and resources on various topics.*

Gregson, Bob. Incredible Indoor Games Book (Belmont, CA: Pitman Learning, Inc.), 1982. *Excellent mixers, crowd-breakers, and games.*

_____. The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book (Belmont, CA: David S. Lake Publishers), 1984. *Excellent mixers, crowd-breakers, and games.*

Haas, David. *Prayers Before an Awesome God: The Psalms for Teenagers* (Winola, MN: Saint Mary's Press), 1998.

Koch, Carl, ed. Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers (Winona: St. Mary's Press), 1991.

McCarty, Robert J., (Consultant) Connect: Junior High (Morristown: Silver Burdett Ginn), 1995. *Connect is a supplemental resource to your larger program. It contains more than 10 topic areas.*

Paulus, Trina. Hope for the Flowers: A Tale Partly About Life and Partly About Revolution and Lots About Hope for Adults and Others (including Caterpillars Who Can Read) (Mahwah: Paulist Press), 1972.

Regan, S. Kevin. 20 more Teen Prayer Services (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications), 1994.

Rice, Wayne and Mike Yaconelli. Creative Resources for Youth Ministry: Creative Crowd-Breakers, Mixers, & Games (Winona: St. Mary's Press), 1991.

Roberto, John, ed. Faith Ways (Naugatuck: Center for Ministry Development), 1996, 1997, 1998. ***FaithWays** provides meaningful and effective faith formation program for young adolescents that engages their energy, imagination, curiosity, compassion and playful spirit in an exploration of the Catholic Faith.*

Sawyer, Kieran, S.S.N.D. Faith Facts for Young Catholics: Drills, Games, and Activities for Middle School Students (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press), 1998.