

Content Standard

Students of the Diocese of Bridgeport will understand that God graciously created all people to “share in his own blessed life.” Through his only Son, Jesus, he invites us to become his adopted children. The foundations for living moral lives are: moral law, God’s grace, and a well-formed conscience (*CCC 1785*).

Rationale

Our moral life flows from Christ’s presence within us. Because it is life in the Son of God, his examples, teachings, and commandments are to be followed. The way of Christ "leads to life"; a contrary way "leads to destruction." Catechesis must reveal in all clarity the joys and demands of the way of Christ, who is “the way and the truth and the life” (*Jn.14:6*) (*CCC 1696-7*).

The demands of the Law are written in their hearts, while their consciences also bear witness, approving those choices that are good, and denouncing those that are evil.

(Rom 2:14-16)

For to me, to live is Christ.

(Phil 1:21)

Performance Standards

1. Students will know the foundations of Catholic teachings from Scripture, Tradition, and the Liturgy of the Church. This is a “catechesis of grace by which we are saved and our works bear fruit for eternal life” (*CCC 1697*).
2. Students will understand the true dignity of the human person as the image of God, called in Baptism by God to a vocation of beatitude, freedom, virtue, and mercy. This includes “a catechesis of the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity,” generously inspired by the example of the saints (*CCC 1697*).
3. Students will understand that rebellion is a rejection of Baptismal promises and a choosing of evil, vice, and sin, requiring a catechesis of sin and forgiveness, by which we know the truth about ourselves and God, whose mercy makes us whole (*CCC 1697*).
4. Students will learn that conscience is a gift from God, which must be formed and aided by grace, in order to recognize the objective difference between good and evil, judging an act moral or immoral. The formation of conscience includes a catechesis of the Holy Spirit, the interior Master of Life, together with a catechesis of human virtues, which attract us to the beauty of doing good (*CCC 1697*).
5. Students will understand that Life in Christ includes following the Commandments, Beatitudes, and the Precepts of the Catholic Church. This is an ecclesial catechesis by which the “Christian life can grow, develop, and be communicated through the Church” (*CCC 1697*).

Grade Level Competencies

By the end of the Pre-K—Kindergarten program, students will be able to:

1. Understand that we are good because we are created in God’s image and likeness.
2. Learn through stories of Jesus how to love others in their families and class.
3. Learn to talk about God.
4. Learn to say "I'm sorry" when we have not been nice to others.

By the end of Grade One, students will be able to:

1. Learn the difference between right from wrong.
2. Know that the Holy Spirit helps them to make good decisions in their everyday lives.
3. Know that Jesus is God, and also the Son of God.
4. Be familiar with stories of Jesus’ healing and forgiveness of sinners.
5. Understand that when they do not act in a caring way with others, they should ask for forgiveness from their parents, teachers, and Jesus.
6. Participate in prayers of forgiveness, thanksgiving, and petition.

By the end of Grade Two, students will be able to:

1. Understand that the Ten Commandments reveal what is right.
2. Know that the great commandment of Jesus: “Love God with all your heart, mind, and all your soul, and love your neighbor as you love yourself,” summarizes the Ten Commandments.
3. Examine their consciences in the light of the Ten Commandments.
4. Know that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross re-presented in the Mass is the source of the forgiveness of our sins.
5. Know that sin is choosing to do wrong, that it displeases God, and hurts us as well as others.
6. Know that when we sin and are sorry for what we have done, we can always be forgiven. With the help of God’s grace and the sacrament of Reconciliation, we can begin again to follow Jesus and do what is right.

By the end of Grade Three, students will be able to:

1. Use their gifts and good qualities to help others.
2. Know that following the Ten Commandments helps us respect the dignity of each person and leads to a happy life with God.
3. Know that we respond to God's love by performing Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.
4. Examine their thoughts, words, and deeds in light of Jesus' Law of Love.
5. Recognize that the power of good and God's grace is stronger than evil.
6. Review the steps and the rite of the sacrament of Reconciliation.
7. Celebrate the seasons of Advent and Lent as a time to strengthen the positive moral habits of prayer and sacrifice and receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.

By the end of Grade Four, students will be able to:

1. Know that Jesus is our role model for the Christian life.
2. Know that virtues are good spiritual habits.
3. Know that our conscience is an inner voice, aided by grace, which helps us to choose what is right.
4. Define mortal and venial sins.
5. Know that prayer helps us in times of temptation.
6. Know that the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) is given to us by Jesus and that, in it, we ask for and receive forgiveness of our sins from God through the priest.
7. Know that living the Beatitudes helps form Christian attitudes and actions.
8. Understand that grace is a supernatural help from God that enables us to live the Christian life.
9. List the Ten Commandments.
10. Respect all life as a gift from God.
11. Recognize and respect that all people are made in the image and likeness of God.

By the end of Grade Five, students will be able to:

1. Know that a parable is a story told by Jesus that can help them understand how to live holy lives.
2. Learn that faith, hope, and charity are special virtues given to them by God at Baptism to help them throughout their whole lives.
3. Understand that sin has personal and social consequences; when we sin, we weaken our friendship with God and with the Church.
4. Learn that the elements of the sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation are: contrition, confession, absolution, and penance.
5. Develop the ability to examine their consciences, in light of the Ten Commandments, using an appropriate Examination of Conscience when necessary.
6. Know that they must respect their bodies because they are Temples of the Holy Spirit.
7. Develop respect for all human life as God's gift because we are made in God's image and likeness.

By the end of Grade Six, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the role of the Old Testament prophets, and their message of God's justice and mercy in the formation of God's chosen people.
2. Recognize the Old Testament Hebrew experiences of faithfulness, sin, and reconciliation reflect the Christian moral life today.
3. Recognize an occasion of sin as any person, place, or object, which may lead them to sin and away from the call to a life of holiness.
4. Recognize that conversion is turning away from sin and toward life in Christ.
5. Recognize that the obedience of the Old Testament leaders can guide them in making their own moral decisions.
6. Know that God and his goodness always prevail over sin and evil.
7. Know that they can call upon the Holy Spirit to help them to do what is right, even in difficult times.
8. Identify that many aspects of popular culture, including some magazines, video games, television, music, and the Internet, etc., are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Ten Commandments.
9. Demonstrate that by their words and actions they respect life and the basic human rights of all people for the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.
10. Learn that habits of selfishness and moral weakness lead to sin.
11. Understand that they are to be chaste and pure in thoughts, words, and actions, both with self and with others.

By the end of Grade Seven, students will be able to:

1. Identify Jesus as God as well as truly human in all ways but sin, and follow his example of obedience to God's will.
2. Know that we should respect others and ourselves because of the presence of Christ in each one of us.
3. Understand that good moral decision-making is possible with the assistance of God's grace and is based on the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and teachings of the Church.
4. Name and discuss the meaning of the theological virtues (faith, hope, charity), and the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance).
5. Understand that Christ's invitation to "...take up your cross and follow Me" (**Mt. 16:24**) demands rejecting destructive secular values and acting in truth and integrity.
6. Understand and recognize that the Church has the authority to provide moral teaching and direction through the Magisterium: The pope, and the bishops in communion with him.
7. Practice an examination of conscience by reflecting on their spiritual, personal, and social responsibilities.
8. Know that prayer, grace, and self-discipline help to overcome temptation.
9. Understand that sexuality is a gift, and that its expression is reserved for those who are married, so that they can have children and show true love for one another.

By the end of Grade Eight, students will be able to:

1. Know that salvation has been merited for us by Jesus in the Paschal Mystery, i.e., the Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
2. Learn and practice the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.
3. Review the importance and the need for frequent reception of the sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
4. Understand the universal call to holiness as exemplified in the lives of the Saints.
5. Appreciate that the frequent reception of the Eucharist is the primary source of grace needed to faithfully live out the Christian life.
6. Know the existence of an objective moral law binding on all human beings.
7. Recognize that through the sacrament of Confirmation, they receive special sacramental grace to deepen their witness to Christ in their daily lives.
8. Know that the Magisterium (the pope and bishops) is the office of the Church that gives definitive and authoritative teaching on matters of faith and morals.
9. Learn the practice and use of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
10. Appreciate the obligation to promote the Christian principles of social justice, especially respect for life, in their community and society at large.
11. Know that the Precepts of the Church help us to participate in the life of the parish and pursue the minimum for a growth in holiness.

12. Understand that sexual desires are good and are given by God to be properly expressed within marriage.
13. Realize that it is wrong to misuse their sexuality by looking at impure magazines and movies, or by daydreaming about sexual activity.