

# Introduction

*“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them;  
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*

*(Matthew 19:14)*



*Ages Four through Fourteen  
(Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight)*

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# Knowing Jesus and His Message

## A Tool for Parish Catechesis



Ages Four through Fourteen  
(Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Eight)

*"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."  
(John 10:10)*

*Diocese of Ogdensburg  
2008*

## **Goals for Ministry with Children and Adolescents**

1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community, e.g. the family community, the parish community, the Catholic School community, the Youth-Serving Organizational Community.
3. To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

### **The Goals in Action**

The Church's ministry with adolescents seeks to:

- guide young people in the call to holiness by developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by meeting him in the Scriptures, in the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and in their own prayer lives;
- empower young people with the knowledge and skills for active participation in the life and ministries of the Church, including a comprehensive and substantive catechesis based on the catechism of the Catholic Church;
- nurture in young people positive, Catholic values of love, honesty, courage, peace and nonviolence, fidelity, chastity, generosity, tolerance, respect for life from conception to natural death, care and compassion, service to those in need, equality, social justice, integrity, responsibility, and community;
- help young people apply their Catholic faith to daily life experiences, nurture in young people a lifelong commitment to the Catholic faith, guiding them in developing a personal faith and skills for continuing their growth as Catholics;
- empower young people to live the moral and theological virtues and apply these virtues in making moral decisions;
- develop the biblical and doctrinal literacy of young people and a deeper appreciation for the importance of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church in the Christian life;
- foster development of a personal spirituality and prayer life in young people;
- nurture in young people an understanding of and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist;
- help young people recognize that the Catholic faith calls them to work for justice and to defend human dignity;
- empower young people to serve those in need, to develop skills that foster social changes to secure justice and equality for every human being, and to live a life of Christian service modeled on Jesus' life;

- empower young people to become healers and reconcilers when conflicts arise, to pursue peace, and to become peaceful persons;
- promote an understanding of and respect for people who are different from the young people---different cultures, different languages, different faiths, different ages---and develop the attitudes and skills for overcoming racial and ethnic prejudices as individuals and members of society;
- develop young people's critical thinking skills that empower them to analyze contemporary life and culture in light of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church;
- promote Catholic sexual values and attitudes and the importance of valuing chastity and sexual restraint;
- promote positive self-image in young people, including an appreciation of one's ethnic culture, a sense of self-esteem, a sense of purpose in life, a positive view of one's personal future, and a humble acceptance of one's self as lovable and loved by God and others;
- develop the life skills of adolescents including the skills for entering into and maintaining meaningful friendships, planning and decision-making skills, life-planning skills, appreciation and understanding of a variety of cultures, and peaceful conflict resolutions skills;
- help young people recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives and discern their particular Christian vocation in the world--- the workplace, in marriage or single life, in the priesthood or consecrated life, or in the permanent diaconate;
- cultivate the gifts and talents of young people, and empower them to utilize these gifts and talents in leadership and ministry in the Church and community including peer ministry and intergenerational skills.

Taken from **Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry**, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 1997.

# STANDARDS AND RATIONALES



## Creed ~ What We Believe



- #1 Present an understanding of the human need for God based on revelation and faith.

**Rationale:** For faith to be living, conscious and active, it is important for young people to understand the human desire for God.



- #2 Read, understand, interpret and apply Scripture to life.

**Rationale:** Scripture, as a vehicle of revelation, enables Catholics to discover truth about God, the world and one-self. As a reflection of the community's experience of God, Scripture gives meaning to prayer, unites values to knowledge and inspires people to hope.



- #3 Illustrate a basic understanding of doctrine and dogma in light of the creed.

**Rationale:** Doctrine and dogmas of the Catholic faith, as vehicles of revelation, are essential foundations for life within the Catholic community.



- #4 Recognize the Trinity as God.

**Rationale:** Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith.



#5 Illustrate a basic understanding of Church.

**Rationale:** Our understanding of God and our identity as Church develops through history. The Church, the Body of Christ, is a reflection of the active and continuing presence of God.



#6 Demonstrate an appreciation for faith community as the primary way we come to know God.

**Rationale:** A relationship with God is not merely a private affair. Along with Scripture, prayer and good teaching, a dynamic faith community is essential to the spiritual formation of its members.



#7 Exercise responsible stewardship for the gift of Creation.

**Rationale:** Creation is a gift from God for all generations. It is the Catholic's responsibility to respect all creation, to share time, talent and treasure, and to preserve the gift for the future.



## Sacraments ~ How We Celebrate



#8 Demonstrate the importance of sacraments, with an emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist, in the life of Catholics.

**Rationale:** Persons encounter God in the sacraments. The sacraments, most centrally the Eucharist, are the source and strength of the Catholic community and are essential to the life of the Church and members of the Church.



## Christian Living ~ How We Live



- #9** Examine a variety of Christian vocations as a response to the baptismal call.

**Rationale:** All Christians are called by God to discipleship through baptism.



- #10** Acknowledge and affirm the dignity of the human person and community.

**Rationale:** Humanity, created in the image and likeness of God, is to be protected and enriched at all stages of life.



- #11** Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations.

**Rationale:** The Gospel call to love one's neighbor is the basis for all human interactions.



- #12** Know, critique and apply social justice principles to personal and societal situations.

**Rationale:** Catholic morality has to do with the public arena as well as personal life. Catholics are called to discern discrepancies, where they exist, between social realities and Gospel values, and to develop strategies to make Gospel values operative.



**#13** Engage in service to the community (e.g. family, parish, local, national and global) in response to the Gospel call.

**Rationale:** By virtue of baptism, Catholics are called to discipleship which is manifest in loving service to others.



**#14** Develop a moral conscience informed by Church teachings.

**Rationale:** Personal life decisions consistent with Church teachings provide opportunities for healthy, holy living on the journey to salvation.



## Prayer ~ How We Pray



**#15** Know and participate in the Catholic traditions of prayer.

**Rationale:** Prayer is essential to the relationship of the Christian to God and the community. Exposure to diverse expressions of prayer, together with traditional Catholic forms of prayer, creates an openness to God.