

# **CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS**

## **PreK – 12 Religion Academic Content Standards and Indicators**

### **FORWARD**

The mission statement of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Memphis is:

The Catholic Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee, System of Catholic Schools is committed to quality education in the Spirit of Christ in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Working in partnership with parents and families, we are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment while preparing our students for the future through spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and moral formation.

To enhance the continued implementation of the mission statement, Sr. Angela T. Lydon, SBS, PhD, developed religion standards, organizers, and indicators. A committee of religious educators, selected by principals, met during the 2005 – 2006 academic school

year. The task of the committee was to rephrase and modify the standards, organizers, and indicators. We are sincerely grateful for the commitment, expertise, and hard work of the following educators:

**Sheila Balton, Sr. M. Louis Baltz, OP, Johna Danovi, Billy Gage, Gerri Garavelli, Sr. Helen Marie Glaser, OP, Marianne Hughes, Marie Lemon, Jeanne Littleton, Judy Neal, Sr. M. Evelyn Potts, OP, Scholyn Rhodes, Christopher Robbins, Mary Lou Stauffer, Lou Tansey, and Sr. Constance Marie Tarallo, SCN.**

We also wish to thank **St. Benedict High School and Christian Brothers High School** for their assistance in helping us complete this project. They willingly shared expertise and resources with us. For their gracious and generous help, we are greatly indebted.

*To Teach as Jesus Did* (1997) provides the guiding vision for our religion curriculum. It states:

Educational programs for the young must strive to teach doctrine, to do so within the experience of Christian community, and to prepare individuals for effective Christian witness and service to others. In doing this, they help foster the student's growth in personal holiness and his [sic] relationship with Christ (p. 22).

The concepts of Catholic Identity form the cornerstone of Catholic schools. They point to what makes a Catholic school Catholic. In other words, Catholic schools are committed to make known the life and teachings of Jesus, make clear Christian values, and sustain the formation of unique relationships through communal prayer and worship. The concepts of Catholic Identity are foundational to the culture, ethos, and spirit of each school and are central to the teaching ministry of all Catholic educators and to the spiritual, academic, and social growth of the entire community. The concepts create a system of Catholic education that honors subjectivity and individuation, respects differentiation and diversity, and cultivates (advances) unity and communion (community). From the elements of Catholic Identity, each school's distinctive culture, ethos, and spirit connect authentic living with Catholic believing.

The mission of each school is to provide relevant instruction and meaningful opportunities for participation in the life of the church. The rationale of all instruction in religion, therefore, is to develop a strong knowledge-base which promotes and enhances active involvement in the liturgical and service life of the church. The interrelationship of developmentally appropriate knowledge and practice empowers students and teachers to live purposeful lives, centered on God.

Catechesis in a Catholic school is the responsibility of teachers and other adults. Foundational to all instruction in religion is the belief system of the Catholic Church and its doctrinal guidelines. In a global world and society, however, students need to encounter the living God in the sacredness of earth itself, in each person, and in the world community. Respect for the magnificence of planet earth and the entire human community as created by God is pivotal to Catholic social teachings. Thus, the task of catechesis is to forge connections between the content of faith, membership in the sacramental life of the parish, and responsible care for the planet and human community.

While the main focus of catechesis is the development of a personal relationship with Jesus, the goal of catechesis is to create mature Catholics and to forge connections between the content of faith, membership in the sacramental life of the parish, and responsible care for the planet and human community. Teachers are to proclaim and live the message of the Gospel, create community, promote service, and engage in prayer. These tasks shape how students and teachers witness and make practical their belief. For teachers, the sources of Catechesis are: Biblical, Liturgical, Ecclesial, and Natural. These sources provide students with a *cohesive and coherent knowledge-base* in the Catholic religion.

Using the standards, organizers, and indicators, our religion curriculum provides holistic and integrative instruction. The standards connect religion to multiple ways of learning. As such, they develop a comprehensive and age-appropriate knowledge-base that links learning with living.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The following is general information which may be helpful in understanding our curriculum and the terminology used.

**Standards** are general statements of content that all students should know in order to be considered literate in a discipline or subject. (In our curriculum document, the standards are in bold print and numbered in Roman Numerals)

**Organizers** categorize the standards; they break down the standards into smaller subgroups. (In our curriculum document, organizers are italicized)

**Indicators** are grade-level specific statements of knowledge that all students demonstrate at their particular grade level. Indicators serve as checkpoints; they monitor progress for each grade level.

(In our curriculum document, the indicators are numbered in Hindu-Arabic numbers)

The 5 standards for Religion are listed below:

## **RELIGION STANDARDS**

**Learn to Worship and Pray Standard**

**Learn to Learn Standard**

**Learn to Live Standard**

**Learn by Heart Standard**

**Learn to Celebrate On-Going Conversion Standard**

## **CONTENT STANDARDS**

The religion standards do not have artificial boundaries nor are they isolated curricular entities. Rather, they form a mosaic of learning and living, doing and praying, celebrating and knowing (recalling). In teaching religion, the skilled educator integrates the standards (using, of course, the appropriate organizers and indicators), connecting the content of the lessons with the kaleidoscope of richness provided by faith and supported by the organizers and indicators. Hence, classroom instruction in religion links the **grade-level content** being taught (Learn to Learn Standard), **with prayer and worship** (Learn to Worship and Pray), **with actual practice** (Learn to Live Standard), **with the ability to recall/remember** (Learn by Heart Standard), and, finally, **with the acknowledgement of human frailty and the need for conversion** (Celebrate On-Going Conversion Standard).

Every religion lesson should explore or develop each of the standards as the 5 standards assure educators and students alike that religion is not just another class. Rather religion is a way of life and part of the fabric of knowing, understanding, and applying what we learn on our journey toward God. Knowledge by itself is inadequate; understanding with knowledge is praiseworthy but

insufficient. When knowledge and understanding are linked with application, a circle is created where practice and belief connect us to each other and God.

The religion curriculum project of the Diocese of Memphis is truly in its beginning stages. More meetings will occur and more committees will be rallied. As a living document, the religion curriculum will continue to develop and evolve. Above all, it will challenge each of us to rethink how religion is taught and lived within each of our schools. It will enable us to renew our commitment to serve all God's people with renewed enthusiasm. It will call each of us to continual conversion as we strive to follow Jesus who is our way, our truth, and our life.

## RELIGION STANDARDS and INDICATORS

### Grades PreK - 12

#### I. Learn to Worship and Pray Standard

*Cultivate a faith-centered school culture and a cohesive program that are open to multiple cultural expressions of prayer and worship.*

1. develop a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer and worship.
  - a. seek opportunities to personalize a relationship with Jesus.
  
2. demonstrate a knowledge of Catholic worship and prayer.
  - a. show cognitive mastery of grade level content.
  - b. communicate mastery of content orally, in writing, and in practice.
  - c. know, understand, and apply fundamental grade level worship and prayer content.
  
3. experience prayer as a natural reality throughout the day.
  - a. participate in a variety of prayer experiences.

4. participate in liturgies, retreats, and reflection.
  - a. take part in (play a part in) liturgical and paraliturgical prayer and activities.
5. witness faith in the school and community.
  - a. be sensitive to the needs of others and offer to serve those who need help.
  - b. demonstrate compassion, care, and empathy toward others.
  - c. work willingly with others.
  - d. develop themes of evangelization in prayer and worship.
6. deepen prayer life to bring about a desire to imitate Jesus.
  - a. develop the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and the moral and cardinal virtues appropriate to age level.
  - b. know, understand, and apply principles of justice, equality, and respect for others, etc.
7. embrace the traditions and customs of the Catholic faith.

## **II. Learn to Learn Standard**

*Develop an intellectually challenging religious education program.*

1. demonstrate a clear knowledge of the unit content.
  - a. demonstrate cognitive mastery of grade level content.
  - b. communicate mastery of content orally and in writing.
  - c. know, understand, and apply grade level content.
2. complete assignments as a meaningful and relevant part of the total school program.
  - a. fulfill written and oral grade level homework in religion.
  - b. demonstrate and integrate connections with other subject content homework.
3. share what they know and witness this knowledge to the larger community through activities, liturgies, etc..
  - a. provide class/school activities that demonstrate acquisition of knowledge through practice (what students know and do).
  - b. use problem solving and critique to reveal how Catholic social teaching assists in analyzing contemporary cultural practices.
4. demonstrate knowledge of content in written and oral forms.

*Develop a religious education program that is sensitive to local, global, and cultural perspectives and maintains the integrity of Catholic teaching.*

5. integrate global knowledge and understandings of religion into all areas of learning: social studies, reading, technology, writing, etc.
6. collaborate and share belief/faith with others, emphasizing diverse global & cultural practices.
  - a. explain similarities/differences in belief systems and give examples from current study.
  - b. critique contemporary cultural practices by utilizing problem solving techniques in light of Gospel values.
7. develop an appreciative and supportive stance toward evangelization.

### **III. Learn to Live Standard**

*Prepare/set up an environment that promotes virtuous living and human growth in all students, spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically.*

1. model grade level content through participation in classroom activities.
2. cultivate the practice of virtues that are an integral part of everyday life and that are modeled by the school community – caring, social justice, respect, etc.
3. engage in reflection and in productive faith sharing.
4. engage in integrative classroom activities that reflect the tenets of grade level content.
5. share Catholic beliefs learned in religion class with others in school and in the community.
6. examine contemporary worldviews.
7. demonstrate the congruence of personal values with Catholic moral and social teachings.
8. participate in family-centered, parish-centered, and community-centered activities through collaborative efforts.
9. engage in spontaneous and joyful religious expression.

10. participate in activities that promote the learning and living of religion – dancing, singing, movement, speech, and celebration.

#### **IV. Learn by Heart Standard**

*Structure a religious education program that enables students to learn by “heart” essential beliefs and prayers.*

1. memorize and use traditional Catholic prayers.
2. recite scriptural passages.

*Create a practical knowledge-base in Catholic historical, liturgical, and cultural thought.*

3. identify the basic beliefs and tenets of the Catholic religion.
4. verbalize and explain the teachings of the Catholic church.
5. know the historical heritage of the Catholic church.
6. become familiar with popes, saints, etc.

## **V. Learn to Celebrate On-Going Conversion Standard**

*Create an effective classroom environment which helps students understand and experience that following and modeling Jesus leads to on-going conversion of heart.*

1. experience through participation the sacramental life of the Church and the local community; the sacramental life of the Church acknowledges our need for God's love in on-going conversion.
2. develop ways to follow and model Jesus, imitating his love, mercy, forgiveness, etc.
3. recognize, appreciate, and support others in their determination to follow and model Jesus.