

Religion Guidelines

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

These Religion Guidelines are those published in 2000; reformatted into trimesters in 2006; revised in 2012 and 2013. Each Grade contains the following:

- The **core content** with references to scripture

To help teachers in their presentations, the outline is referenced to scripture which suggests certain passages that complement a specific topic in the outline. Teachers are encouraged to use the scripture passages for personal prayer as well as for reflection and for sharing with students. This could help the children become increasingly more familiar and comfortable with scripture and its importance in the lives of both the Church and of those who are followers of Jesus Christ. The numbers on the right side of the page in parentheses correspond to the **paragraph numbers** in the Catechism of the Catholic Church which treat of a specific subject or concept. This is to help the teachers in their own background reading. It is not intended that students be taught directly from the Catechism.

- The **Liturgical Year** (Ordinary Time; Advent; Christmas Season; Lent; Holy Week; Triduum; Easter Season; Saints and Holy People) is developed according to its appropriate placement in each trimester. The importance of *Sunday* is stressed.
- Summaries of the feasts of **Mary** and lives of the **Saints**
- **Praying with Children**

Each Grade is required to learn certain of our Traditional Catholic Prayers. The versions we should teach can be found in either the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), Appendix B: Traditional Catholic Prayers *or* the Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church, Appendix A: Common Prayers (English and Latin).

Hopefully, using these guidelines as the basis of teaching the subject of Religion will contribute to developing a strong religious foundation in the Catholic Faith for each student, and invite the student into the mission of the Church which is the mission of Jesus Christ. It is our hope that each student will come to a deeper understanding of the Catholic Faith and be able to articulate this faith. The **faith believed** is the **faith celebrated** in one's full, conscious and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. The **faith believed** is the **faith lived** in a moral life that demonstrates the social consequences of living according to the demands of the Gospel. It is a life that serves the needs of others with care and compassion. The **faith believed** is the **faith prayed** in attitudes of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and awe for the glory of God.

First Trimester

I. SACRAMENTS

(1084, 1114, 1131, 1210)

A. DEFINITIONS

(Outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace.)

1. Sacraments are symbolic actions which effect what they symbolize.
2. Jesus is the perfect sacrament of God communicating God's life to us.
3. The Church is the sacrament of Jesus' presence among us carrying on his mission.
4. Sacramental symbols are words, objects, or gestures which contain the divine reality they signify.

B. PURPOSE OF THE SACRAMENTS

(1123)

1. Through the sacraments Jesus makes us holy.
2. In the sacraments, part of the public worship of the Church, the whole Church gives worship to God.
3. Through *grace* we are made like Jesus Christ. (2017-24)
 - a. Grace was made possible for us by Christ's life, death, and resurrection.
 - b. God gives us grace so we can respond to the invitation to be his adopted children.
 - c. When we come to the sacraments with faith, Jesus offers us special *sacramental* grace.

II. SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION: *BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST*

A. MEANING OF INITIATION

The journey, in steps, that a person takes to share in the life of God and join the Church, the People of God.

B. BAPTISM (1275-84)

1. Baptism cleanses us from original sin,
makes us children of God and members of the Church.

a. Original Sin occurred at the beginning of human history.
We inherit this sin from Adam and Eve because of
their disobedience to God.

b. Baptismal promises invite the candidate to reject sin
and to acknowledge one's faith in Jesus Christ.

c. Baptism is the first sacrament one receives;
it marks one forever as belonging to Jesus Christ.

2. Ordinary minister

a. Priest or deacon

b. In case of emergency, any person with the proper intention

3. Godparents (1255)

a. Firm believers, who with the parents,
are ready and able to help the newly baptized

b. Task is a truly essential role in the Church.

4. Rite of Baptism (1239)

a. *Rites* are ceremonies in liturgical worship

b. The words and actions of each sacrament are
the *rite* of that sacrament.

- 1) Sign of the Cross (1235)
The priest welcomes the candidates, calls them by name, and claims them for Christ by making the sign of the cross on their forehead.
 - 2) Scripture (1236)
The Word of God is proclaimed.
 - 3) Oil
The candidates are anointed with the Oil of Catechumens.
 - 4) Water (1238)
 - a) The water is consecrated by a prayer.
 - b) The Baptismal promises are made.
 - c) The triple pouring of water on the candidate's head or immersion in water using the words:
(1239-40)
"N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
 - 5) Chrism (1241)
The newly baptized are anointed with *sacred chrism*, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop.
 - 6) White garment (1243)
The newly baptized are clothed with Jesus Christ.
 - 7) Candle (1243)
A candle is lit from the Easter/Paschal Candle reminds everyone that at Baptism we receive the light of Christ.
5. Adult Baptism (1232)
- a. Adults who wish to belong to the Catholic Church journey through the R.C.I.A.
(Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)
 - b. The Code of Canon Law regards anyone who is not an infant as an adult, that is those who have reached the use of reason.
(See Canon 852.1)

c. Catechumens are unbaptized persons

- 1) They decide whether they want to *convert* and become a new person in Christ. *Conversion* is a movement from unbelief to belief.
- 2) During the Easter Vigil, they celebrate the three sacraments of Initiation. (1249)
Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
- 3) With other members of the Catholic Church they declare their belief in God and the teachings of Jesus and his Church.
- 4) Catechuminate (1230)
Period of catechesis so that the catechumen grows in faith and is ready to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation.

C. CONFIRMATION (1285)

1. The Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. In this sacrament, we receive gifts from the Holy Spirit in order to help us more effectively live out our witness to Jesus Christ.

a. Confirmation renews and strengthens our baptismal call to witness to Jesus Christ.

b. Confirmation is a call to serve.

- 1) To pray as Jesus prayed.
- 2) To love and serve God as Jesus did.
- 3) To follow the teachings of Jesus and his Church.
- 4) To spread the Good News to others.
- 5) To work for the Church.

c. Ordinary Minister - the Bishop (1312-13)

d. Confirmation Candidates
Those who are to be confirmed.

e. Sponsors (1311)
Those who provide spiritual help for the candidates

preparing for Confirmation and who, by the example of their lives, show them how to live as a Christian.

It is appropriate that this sponsor be one of the baptismal godparents.

f. Confirmation usually takes place during Mass.

2. Rite of Confirmation (1320)

a. Presentation of the Candidates

After the Gospel, the candidates are presented to the bishop.

b. Homily

The bishop speaks to those assembled.

c. Renewal of Baptismal Promises

d. Laying on of hands and prayer over the candidates

e. Anointing with chrism on the forehead in the form of the cross

Bishop: N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Response: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

1) A seal is a symbol of a person; (1295-96)
this seal means we belong to
Jesus Christ forever; we will serve
him and he will protect us.

2) To witness means to show by words and
actions that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

3. Effects of Confirmation (1302-05)

a. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1) Wisdom

Enables a person to recognize God and value
the practices of the Christian way of life

- 2) Understanding
Enables one to see clearly into the mysteries of our faith
- 3) Counsel (Right Judgment)
Guides one in practical matters
- 4) Knowledge
Enables one to see God reflected in all creatures
- 5) Fortitude (Courage)
Makes one able to love God no matter what stands in the way
- 6) Piety (Reverence)
Helps one to love and reverence God
- 7) Fear of the Lord
(Wonder and Awe in God's Presence)
Helps keep one from offending God by sin

b. Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Gal. 5:22-29, (1832)

- 1) Church tradition lists twelve fruits
Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience (Longanimity),
Kindness, Goodness, Generosity,
Gentleness (Benignity), Faithfulness, Modesty,
Self-control (Continency), Chastity
- 2) Other translations list nine (736)
Love, Joy, Peace, Patience,
Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness,
Gentleness, and Self-control

III. LITURGICAL YEAR

(1163-73)

A. DEFINITION

The cycle of feasts and seasons celebrating the events of Jesus' life and his presence in the Church.

B. SUNDAY

The Lord's day is the day on which we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection. We go to Mass on this special day to give praise and thanks to God. It is the heart of the Church's life.

C. ORDINARY TIME: liturgical color is green for hope, growth, life.

1. Time in the winter between Christmas time and Lent.
2. Time in the summer and fall from Pentecost to the Feast of Christ the King.
3. Refers to ordinal, counted time.
4. Time to hear the Scriptures proclaimed inviting us to live out the mysteries of our faith and the message of the Gospels.
 - a. Cycle A - Gospel of St. Matthew
 - b. Cycle B - Gospel of St. Mark
 - c. Cycle C - Gospel of St. Luke

D. ADVENT

1. Liturgical color is purple for preparation, sorrow for sin
2. Begins the Liturgical Year
3. Period of four weeks of preparation for the birth of Jesus, Christmas
4. Advent symbols
 - a. Advent Wreath
 - 1) The circle of greens reminds us that God has no beginning and has no end
 - 2) There are four candles - three purple and one pink
 - 3) One candle is lit each week.
 - b. Jesse Tree

E. CHRISTMAS

1. Liturgical color is white for joy, glory, innocence
2. Story of Jesus' Birth Mt. 1:18 - 2:23

F. SAINTS AND HOLY PEOPLE

Special days to honor saints are ranked and celebrated in different degrees.

Solemnity: liturgies celebrating events, beliefs, and personages of principal importance and universal significance in salvation history

Feast: liturgies of minor importance

Memorial: liturgies celebrating minor events in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of saints significant to a local country, church or religious community

August 4: St. John Vianney

St. John Vianney is the patron saint of all priests. Born in France in 1786, John Vianney grew up during a time when it was dangerous to be a Catholic and even more so to be a priest. The French Revolution meant that many priests went into hiding and said Mass in secret. When the Church was made legal again in 1802, St. John expressed his desire to become a priest. However, he was drafted into the Army and was forced into hiding. He resumed his studies in 1810, but was always falling behind. Despite this, he was finally ordained in 1815. His biggest challenge was to re-educate his parishioners in the faith, since it had been illegal for so many years. He was so successful that he soon became known all over France and Europe. He spent up to 16 hours a day in the confessional, hearing the confessions of the thousands of pilgrims who traveled to see him. St. John Vianney died in 1859.

August 14: St. Maximilian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr

Polish priest Maximilian Kolbe was martyred at Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. He was born in Poland in 1894 to a working class family. As a child he had a vision of Mary, who offered him a white crown for purity and a red crown for martyrdom. He told her he would accept both crowns. He joined the Conventual Franciscans in 1907, took his final vows in 1915, and was sent to Rome to study. Returning to Poland after his ordination in 1918, St. Maximilian worked with energy and zeal to found a monastery, a seminary, a Catholic radio station, and various publications aimed at bolstering the Catholic faith against the spread of secularism. He also spent several years in Japan as a missionary. He returned to Poland and used his monastery to hide thousands of Jews at the outset of World War II. Because of this act, he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz in 1941. That summer,

three prisoners escaped and ten men were sentenced to starve to death as punishment. One of the men chosen to die begged to live, and St. Maximilian offered to die in his place. He spent his final two weeks praying and celebrating Mass each day. He died from a lethal injection on August 14, 1941.

August 23: St. Rose of Lima

St. Rose of Lima is the first person born in the Americas to be declared a saint. She was born in Lima, Peru in 1586 and given the name Isabel Flores. Her father nicknamed her “Rose” because of her holiness even as a child. She wanted to emulate St. Catherine of Siena, and so did penance, prayed before the Blessed Sacrament and cut off her hair when her family wished her to marry. She became a Dominican tertiary when she was twenty. Spending her days doing embroidery to sell and give the money to the poor, she spent her nights in prayer and mortification. She died in 1617 when she was thirty-one.

IV. MARY

A. MAJOR BELIEFS

1. Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church (963, 975)
 - a. Mary is honored as the Mother of God and the Mother of the Redeemer.
 - b. Mary is the Mother of the Body of Christ, the Church.
 - c. Mary cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and charity in the Savior’s work of redemption.
2. Mary is our spiritual Mother who continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of us.

B. DAYS IN HONOR OF MARY

September 8 Feast of the Birth of Mary

Mary was the daughter of Saints Ann and Joachim. They prayed that God would bless them with a child, and He rewarded their faithfulness with a daughter set apart to be the mother of the Son of God. Because of this, she was conceived and born

immaculate and full of grace. We do not know from the Gospels the exact date of Mary's birth. However, Christians have celebrated it on September 8th since the 7th century. Mary's birth is one of only three celebrated on the liturgical calendar.

September 15 Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

Today, we remember how Mary, as the mother of Jesus, suffered greatly. There are seven events in particular that we recognize, called the Seven Sorrows. The Sorrows, which are all found in the Gospels, are the prophecy of Simeon (Lk. 2:34-35), the flight into Egypt to escape Herod (Mt. 2:13-21), the loss of Jesus for three days in the Temple (Lk. 2:41-50), meeting Jesus on the road Calvary (Jn. 19:17), the crucifixion and death of Jesus (Jn. 19:18-30), holding Jesus when He was taken down from the cross (Jn. 19:39-40), and Jesus laid in the tomb (Jn. 19:40-42). St. Bernard wrote, "Truly, O Blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart...He died in body through a love greater than anyone had known. She died in spirit through a love unlike any other since His." Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.

October 7 Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

This feast was established by Saint Pius V. Pope Gregory XIII later named this the Feast of the Holy Rosary. This feast invites everyone to meditate upon the mysteries of Christ, following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was so singularly associated with the incarnation, passion and glorious resurrection of the Son of God. (Christian Prayer, 1976, p. 1285)

November 19 Our Lady of Divine Providence

On November 19, 1969 Pope Paul VI declared Our Lady Mother of Divine Providence principal patroness of the island of Puerto Rico, since November 19 was the date that the island was discovered. The image of Our Lady that is so special to the people of Puerto Rico shows the Divine Child sleeping peacefully in the Virgin Mary's arms. However, the name and worship of Our Lady of the Divine Providence originated in Italy in the 12th century, then spread to Spain and then to Puerto Rico.

November 21 Memorial of the Presentation of Mary

The Presentation of Mary is a unique feast day. Although the event is not in the Bible, we learn from other sources that Mary's parents, Ann and Joachim, offered Mary to God in the Temple when she was only three years old. We celebrate this event because it helps us to understand Mary's unique holiness, which was nurtured from the very beginning of her life.

C. PRAYERS

1. The *Rosary*
2. The *Hail, Holy Queen*
3. The *Angelus / Regina Coeli*
4. The *Memorare*

V. PRAYER

A. DEFINITION

(2559, 2626-49)

Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God.
It is communication with God.

B. KINDS OF PRAYER

1. Vocal - conversation with God using words or symbols of expression.
2. Mental - expresses one's private thoughts.
3. Liturgical - the official public worship of the Church:
the Mass, the sacraments, and the Liturgy of the Hours

C. PURPOSE

1. Adoration - to acknowledge the goodness of God
2. Thanksgiving - to praise and thank God
3. Petition - to ask God's help and mercy
4. Contrition - to express sorrow for one's sins and
to ask God's forgiveness

Second Trimester

I. SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION: *BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST*

A. HOLY EUCHARIST (1322)

1. The Holy Eucharist is the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

a. Sacrifice

“...the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains forever present.” (1364)

b. Sacrament

Christ himself is really present under the appearances of bread and wine.

c. Communion (1330)

In the Mass Jesus Christ unites us to himself and one another.

2. Jesus’ presence in the Blessed Sacrament is called the *Real Presence*.

3. Jesus is present in his Word, priests, and people. (1377)

4. Importance of the Eucharist in Life of Church (1211, 1324)

a. The center of the Church’s life (1343)

b. Remembers the Lord’s passion, death, and resurrection

- c. Remembers the Last Supper
- d. Helps one to grow spiritually and overcome temptation
- e. Increases charity within the community of the Church
- f. A Sacrament of Reconciliation and completion of Initiation

5. Preparation to receive Jesus in Holy Communion

- a. We prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist through participating in the *Penitential Rite* and by our attentive listening to the Word of God
- b. Mortal sin separates a person from God and his people and must be confessed in the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion.
- c. Fasting - We prepare to receive Holy Communion by NOT eating or drinking for one hour. (You may have medicine or water.) Those who are sick or elderly and those who care for them need not fast.

6. Celebration of the Eucharist - The Mass (1345-1419)

The Eucharist is our greatest prayer; it is the prayer of *thanksgiving*.

a. Introductory Rites

Make the assembly a unified community and prepare them to listen to God's Word. (GIRM 24)

- 1) Entrance Song
- 2) Veneration of the Altar, Sign of the Cross and Greeting
- 3) Penitential Rite
- 4) Lord, Have Mercy
- 5) Gloria
- 6) Opening Prayer

b. Liturgy of the Word

God speaks to his people of redemption and salvation and nourishes their spirit through the proclamation of the Scriptures. (GIRM 33)

- 1) First reading
- 2) Responsorial Psalm
- 3) Second reading
- 4) Gospel Acclamation
- 5) Gospel
- 6) Homily
- 7) Profession of Faith
- 8) General Intercessions

c Liturgy of the Eucharist

In this meal the sacrifice of the cross is continually made present in the church when the priest carries out what Jesus did. (GIRM 48)

- 1) Preparation of the Gifts
- 2) Eucharistic Prayer
- 3) Communion Rite

d. Concluding Rite

- 1) Priest's greeting and blessing
- 2) The dismissal

7. Vessels and other objects used at Mass

- a. Chalice - the vessel used to hold the wine that will become the Blood of Jesus
- b. Paten - the plate used to hold the host that will become the Body of Jesus
- c. Ciborium - the covered cup-like vessel used to hold the consecrated hosts for the distribution of Holy Communion

- d. Altar cloth - the large cloth that covers the top of the altar
 - e. Corporal - a linen cloth placed in the center of the altar
on which the chalice and paten are placed
 - f. Purificator - a linen cloth used by the priest to clean
the chalice during Mass
 - g. Finger cloth - the cloth the priest uses to wipe his fingers
 - h. Cruets - containers that hold the water and wine
 - i. Candles - two lighted candles are placed on the altar
8. Vestments - the official attire worn at liturgical functions
- a. Alb - a long white robe worn by the priest/deacon at Mass
 - b. Cincture - a cord the priest/deacon wears around the waist
 - c. Stole
 - 1) A long decorated strip of cloth worn by the priest/deacon
 - 2) It is a sign of their ordination
 - 3) It is the color of the Liturgical Season/Feasts
 - d. Chasuble
 - 1) A sleeveless outer vestment worn over the alb by the priest
 - 2) It is the color of the Liturgical Season/Feasts
9. Liturgical Books
- a. Roman Missal - used by the priest for the various prayers
of the Mass
 - b. Lectionary / Lectionary for Masses with Children
- used by the lector in proclaiming the
Scriptures at Mass
 - c. Book of Gospels - used by the deacon/priest in proclaiming
the Gospel at Mass

10. Liturgical Environment for Mass

- a. Altar
- b. Ambo / pulpit
- c. Celebrant's chair
- d. Tabernacle
- e. Lectern (for cantor)

11. Special Ministers

- a. Lector
- b. Cantor (and/or leader of song)
- c. Musicians
- d. Altar Server (1143)
- e. Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (1348)
- f. Minister of Hospitality (Usher)

12. Participation in Eucharistic Meal

- a. Communion may be received on the tongue or in the hand
- b. Communion may be received under both species -
the consecrated bread and wine
- c. Reception of Communion no more than twice in one liturgical day

13. Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass

- a. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament
- b. Exposition and Benediction

- c. Forty Hours
 - 1) History
 - 2) Practice

II. LITURGICAL YEAR (1168-71)

A. LENT (1095)

- 1. Time of preparation for Easter, forty days
- 2. From Ash Wednesday to the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday
- 3. Liturgical color is purple for penance, repentance

B. HOLY WEEK

- 1. Palm Sunday Jn. 12:12-19
- 2. Triduum
 - a. Holy Thursday Mt. 26:26-35
Mass of the Lord's Supper Mk. 14:22-31,
Lk. 22:14-23
 - b. Good Friday Mt. 27, Mk. 15,
Lk. 23
Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Liturgical color is red
 - c. Holy Saturday: Easter Vigil
 - 1) Service of light: blessing of the Easter Fire
 - 2) Lighting of the Paschal Candle
 - a) Large candle that is a sign
of the presence of the Risen Lord
 - b) A cross is cut into the candle
 - c) Alpha - A the first letter of the Greek alphabet
is traced above the cross

- d) Omega - Ω the last letter of the Greek alphabet is traced below the cross
- e) The numerals of the current year are traced between the arms of the cross
- f) Five grains of incense are inserted in the candle in the form of a cross. These symbolize the five glorious wounds of Christ.
- g) Candle leads the procession into Church. It also leads the procession during the Rite of Baptism at the Easter Vigil and is kept near the baptismal font to be used during baptisms and funerals.

d. Easter: Sunset of Holy Saturday to sunset of Easter Sunday

C. SAINTS AND HOLY PEOPLE

November 4: St. Charles Borromeo

St. Charles Borromeo, who lived in Italy from 1538-1584, is remembered as a great reformer of the Church during the Reformation. A member of the powerful Medici family, his uncle was Pope Pius IV. He became a priest at the age of 25 and held some important positions within the Church. He was made Secretary of State in 1559 and helped reconvene the Council of Trent in 1562. He oversaw the writing of the catechism, missal and breviary for the Council, helped establish seminaries, founded the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for educating young children, and helped promote the Jesuit missions in England. He continued to work tirelessly to institute Church reforms until his death in 1584.

January 21: St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr

St. Agnes was born to a noble Christian family in Rome in 291. She vowed to protect her chastity and declared Christ as her spouse. Her youthful beauty attracted the son of the Governor, who denounced her as a Christian when she refused to marry him. The Governor gave her lavish gifts to convince her to give up her faith and Agnes refused. Despite her young age of thirteen, Agnes was martyred in 304.

January 23: St. Marianne Cope

Marianne Cope emigrated to the US from Germany with her family in 1839 when she was a baby. At age thirteen, she worked in a factory to support her poor family. Marianne entered the Sisters of St. Francis at age twenty-three. She taught at a school

for new German immigrants, eventually ran two Catholic hospitals and soon became Superior General. In 1883, Mother Marianne responded to a letter from King Kalākaua of Hawaii to bring sisters to the islands to care for people with leprosy. She spent her first years reforming the hospitals on Maui and Oahu, but eventually agreed to work in the leper colony of Molokai with St. Damien. She took over the work when St. Damien died and remained devoted to serving the lepers on Molokai until her death in 1918. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in October of 2012.

III MARY

A. MARY AND CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

1. The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.
2. Pope John Paul II states, “Mary is present in the memorial at Mass because she was present in the Event!”
3. Other Devotions
 - a. The *Rosary* is a special prayer of devotion in honor of Mary in which we meditate on the *joyful, sorrowful, glorious, and luminous* mysteries in the lives of Jesus and Mary.
 - b. The *Magnificat* (Canticle of Mary) is Mary’s song of praise which she prayed at the time of her visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

B. DAYS IN HONOR OF MARY

December 8 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Under the title of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is revered as the patroness of the United States and of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared: “From the first moment of her conception, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, by a unique grace and privilege of God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved from all stain of Original Sin.” (CCC #490-91)

December 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, a poor Mexican Indian, on December 9, 1531. Mary told Juan to build a Church. Juan went to the Bishop to tell him the Lady’s

request. The bishop did not believe him. Three days later, when Juan again went to the bishop and opened his cloak to give to the Bishop roses which the Lady had arranged in Juan's cloak, there was a picture of Mary on his cloak. The Bishop believed and built a church in honor of Mary. We honor Our Lady of Guadalupe because we recognize her concern for all people especially the suffering and the poor. December 9 is the feast of Saint Juan Diego.

January 1 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

This feast of Mary is considered to be one of the oldest and most important feasts of Our Lady. In 431, the Council of Ephesus met to correct false teachings about Christ's divinity. The Council affirmed that Jesus is true God and true man. Since Mary is the Mother of Jesus, who is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, she can truly be called the Mother of God. Devotion to Mary as the Mother of God continued to spread from this time to the present.

February 2: Purification of Mary/Presentation of the Lord

Mary and Joseph presented the newborn Jesus at the Temple, according to Jewish law, forty days after his birth. They sacrificed a pair of turtledoves, according to the custom of the poor. At the temple, they met Simeon, a man whom God had promised would not die until he saw the Savior. Upon seeing Jesus, Simeon prayed, "Lord, now let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled" (Luke 2:29). Simeon also prophesied to Mary, "A sword will pierce your soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35). The presentation of Jesus in the temple is the Fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary.

February 11 Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes

Mary appeared to a fourteen year old girl named Bernadette Soubirous on February 11, 1858 in Lourdes, France. Our Lady appeared dressed in white with a blue sash, yellow roses at her feet and a rosary in her hand. Mary appeared eighteen times to Bernadette. The Lady told her many things among them that, although Bernadette would not find happiness in this life, she would find it in Heaven. She told her to pray for sinners and to do penance. The Blessed Mother told Bernadette to have a chapel built at the site where she appeared and that processions were to be held. When Bernadette asked the Lady what her name was, she said, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Through Bernadette, the Blessed Mother called sinners to a change in heart, to reach out and care for the sick, the poor, and those who had lost hope. Each year millions of people make their way through the mountainous country of southeastern France to the shrine at Lourdes. They come to ask Jesus through the intercession of his Mother for a cure of their body or soul.

IV. PRAYER

(2697-2724)

A. DEFINITION

Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God. It is communication with God. It is a way of deepening our relationship with God.

B. EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER (See pages 36-43)

1. The Jesus Prayer
2. Choral Speech (Praying in Common)
3. Song and Gesture
4. Journal Keeping
5. Meditation
6. Guided Meditation
7. Shared Prayer

V. SACRAMENTALS

1. Sacred signs that bear resemblance to the sacraments (1667)
2. Prepare one to receive the fruit of the sacraments (1677)
3. Characteristics (1668)
 - a. Include a prayer
 - b. Accompanied often by a specific sign
(ex., the laying on of hands or the sprinkling of holy water)
4. Forms
 - a. Blessings (1671)
 - b. Consecrations (1672)

- c. Dedications (blessing of a church or altar)

VI. SOCIAL JUSTICE

“The commitment to human life and dignity, to human rights and solidarity, is a calling all Catholic educators must share with their students. It is not a vocation for a few religion teachers, but a challenge for every Catholic educator and catechist.”

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching Challenges and Directions , USCC, 1998, p. 7

Major Themes:

**The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
Call to Family, Community and Participation
Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

A. AWARENESS OF THE BASIC DIGNITY OF EACH PERSON

1. Discuss ways to peacefully resolve peer conflicts.
2. Celebrate birthdays and cultural and ethnic heritage.
3. Discuss ways to show respect for all members of a family.
4. Brainstorm ways to express forgiveness

B. RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

1. Participate in parish and/or school collections: food, clothing, toys, etc.
2. Connect with Archdiocesan Social Service Agencies

Third Trimester

I. THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING (1420-21)

The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation begun in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. (1421)

A. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1. Definition (1422-24)

Penance is a sacrament through which Christ forgives the sins of those who seek his mercy.

2. Elements of the sacrament (1450-60)

- a. Know your sin (*examination of conscience*)
- b. Sorrow for sin (*contrition*)
- c. Acknowledgment of sin (*confession*)
- d. Firm purpose not to sin again (*amendment*)
- e. Completion of Penance given by the priest (*satisfaction*)
- f. Sign of God's forgiveness (*absolution*)

3. Understanding of Sin (1455-58)

a. Definition - any deliberate thought, word or action through which we refuse to love God, others and ourselves.

b. Types

- 1) Original Sin (388-89)
 - a) Sin of Adam and Eve
 - b) Loss of original holiness and justice (416)
 - c) Human nature is weakened and inclined to sin (418)
- 2) Personal Sin (1849-51, 1872-73)
 - a) Mortal Sin - a serious offense against God which results in a total break in our friendship with him.
 - 1) Grave and serious matter
 - 2) Clear knowledge
 - 3) Full consent
 - b) Venial Sin - a less serious sin which harms but does not break our relationship with God.
- 3) Social Sin (1928-48)
 - a) Any unjust structure, system, or attitude that denies people their rights and dignity, i.e., communism, racism, segregation
 - b) Prejudice and discrimination against ANY group; the Arms Race; refusing to share wealth and the goods of the world
- 4) Sins against life (2258-2330)
 - a) Abortion, murder, terrorism
 - b) Abuse of drugs and alcohol
 - c) Discrimination of race, sex or age
 - d) Nuclear war

4. Grace (2003)

a. Definition - God's divine life in us.

It is a special gift that God freely gives so that we may share in his happiness.

b. Effect - we share in God's life.

5. Forgiveness

- a. It begins with God's mercy and love that comes to us in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- b. God's mercy and love enables us to forgive ourselves and others.

6. Rite of Reconciliation

a. Preparation

- 1) Praise of God for the forgiveness of sin through the death and resurrection of his Son
- 2) Thank God for his grace in your life
- 3) Examine where you have failed / sinned in love of God and neighbor (examination of conscience)

b. Celebration of the Rite

- 1) Communal celebration with individual confession and absolution
 - a) Face to face exchange
 - b) Kneeling at the fixed confessional grill

7. Frequency of Reception

- a. It is recommended that we receive the sacrament of Penance regularly.
- b. We are obligated to confess mortal sins.

8. The *Seal of Confession* - the priest is never allowed to reveal what has been told him in confession.

B. THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

(1499-1532)

“Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” Jas. 5:14-15, (1526)

1. Definition (1527)
 - a. Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament through which Jesus Christ offers the healing, strengthening power of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The sacrament confers a special grace on the Christian experiencing the difficulties of a grave illness or old age.
 - c. The sacrament may be received each time one falls seriously ill. (1529)
2. Rite of Anointing of the Sick (Outside of Mass)
 - a. Introductory Rites
 - 1) Greeting: the priest greets all with peace and asks the family to pray that God bless all present
 - 2) Sprinkling with Holy Water: Renewal of one's Baptism
 - 3) Instruction: brief explanation of the origin of the sacrament (Rooted in the Letter of St. James)
 - 4) Penitential Rite or reception of the Sacrament of Penance
 - b. Liturgy of the Word
 - 1) Reading
 - 2) Response
 - c. Liturgy of Anointing
 - 1) Litany
 - 2) Laying on of Hands
 - 3) Anointing
 - 4) Lord's Prayer
 - d. Liturgy of Holy Communion
 - 1) Reception of Holy Communion
 - 2) Prayer
 - e. Concluding Rite: Blessing
3. Effects of the Sacrament
 - a. Spiritual healing: one experiences spiritual healing - the presence of Christ in their sickness and the grace not to lose faith

b. Physical healing: at times physical healing can occur

4. This Sacrament may be received more than once.

II. THE SACRAMENTS AT THE SERVICE OF COMMUNION (1534-1600)

The whole Church is a priestly people. (1591)

Through Baptism we are all members of the Body of Christ and we are consecrated for the common priesthood of all the faithful. We are called to worship, praise, petition, and thank God as Jesus Christ did. Others are called to nurture and build up the unity of the Body of Christ through particular consecrations.

A. HOLY ORDERS

1. Definition

a. A person is consecrated in the name and person of Jesus Christ to serve God and the people of God.

b. It is a sacrament of apostolic ministry (1536)

2. Purpose

a. To help people grow as members of the Body of Christ Lk. 22:24-27

b. To preach and teach God's Word

c. To celebrate the sacraments with the faithful

3. Ministerial priesthood: Degrees of Holy Orders (1554)

a. Episcopacy - Bishops (886, 1555-61)

- 1) As a successor of the apostles,
he possess the fullness of Holy Orders:
- preaching the Gospel

- celebrating sacraments
- nurturing the unity of the church through charity
- 2) Chief shepherds, teachers, and rulers of dioceses
(groups of parishes in a geographic location)
- 3) Symbols of a bishop
 - a) Ring - symbol of the bond
between the bishop and his people
 - b) Miter - liturgical headdress that signifies the
office of bishop, cardinal, or pope.
(The front and back pieces of material
represent the Old and New Testaments.)
 - c) Crosier - the staff carried by the bishop that
symbolizes his role as chief shepherd

- b. Presbyterate: Ordained priests (1562-68)
 - 1) Co-workers of the bishop
 - 2) Signed with a special character enabling (1563)
them to act in the person of Christ
 - 3) Consecrated to preach the Gospel and
celebrate the sacraments
 - 4) Variety of ministry for priests
 - a) Pastors
 - b) Teachers
 - c) Chaplains
 - d) Missionaries
 - e) Religious Orders
(Jesuits, Augustinians, Vincentians, etc.)
 - 5) Symbols
 - a) Alb
 - b) Stole
 - c) Chasuble

- c. Deacons (1569-71)
 - 1) Assist the bishops and priests in service
 - a) Proclaim the Gospel and preach
 - b) Distribute Communion
 - c) Baptize
 - d) Preside over funerals
 - e) Bless marriages
 - f) Participate in works of charity

2) Kinds

- a) Transitional deacons
 - those preparing for priesthood:
make promises of celibacy
and obedience to the bishop
- b) Permanent deacons
 - unmarried men who promise
celibacy and obedience to the bishop
 - married men who promise
obedience to the bishop

3) Symbols

- 1) Alb
- 2) Stole
- 3) Dalmatic (outer garment)

3. Rite of Ordination

- a. Laying on of Hands: ritual invoking the Holy Spirit
- b. Prayer of Consecration: asking God the Father
to send the Holy Spirit and consecrate
these men in the person of Jesus Christ

B. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

(1601-58)

1. Definition

- a. Matrimony is the union of two people
who freely enter into a loving covenant
with each other in Christ.
- b. A sacred sign that gives witness to the world
of the love between Christ and
his Bride, the Church

2. Purpose

- a. Husband and wife grow in union through
faithfulness to each other until death
- b. Couple accept children and intend to raise them in the faith

3. Rite of Marriage
 - a. Ministers - the wife and husband
 - b. Exchange of vows
 - c. Nuptial Blessing

III. LITURGICAL YEAR

A. EASTER SEASON (1168-69)

Sunset of Easter Sunday to sunset of the Solemnity of Pentecost

1. Easter Sunday: liturgical color is white
for glory, joy, innocence
Mt. 28:1-15,
Mk. 16:1-8,
Lk. 24:1-12,
Jn. 20:1-10
2. Ascension Thursday: liturgical color is white
marks the end of Jesus' earthly appearances
Mt. 28:16-20,
Mk. 16:19-20
Lk. 24:50-53,
Acts 1:6-12
3. Pentecost: liturgical color is red
for the Holy Spirit
Acts 2:1-4
 - a. Fifty days after Easter
 - b. The birthday of the Church

B. OTHER CELEBRATIONS

1. Trinity Sunday - Sunday after Pentecost
2. Corpus Christi (Body and Blood of Christ) - Sunday after Trinity Sunday
3. Solemnity of the Sacred Heart - Friday after the Second Sunday after Pentecost

C. ORDINARY TIME: liturgical color is green for hope, growth, life

D. SAINTS AND HOLY PEOPLE

May 10: St. Damien of Molokai

Joseph de Vuester was born in 1840, the son of Belgian farmers. He joined the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and chose the name “Damien”. These missionaries were responsible for the Catholic faith on the Hawaiian Islands. He spent eight years traveling by horseback and by canoe to serve the people. The Bishop asked for a volunteer priest to go to the island of Molokai, a place for people dying of leprosy. There were no health care facilities, no law enforcement, and no priests on Molokai. The people were in desperate need of help. Father Damien volunteered, knowing he would not be allowed to leave the island. Molokai took on a whole different meaning after he arrived. It became an island of Christian love. He labored for eighteen years until his death. Father Damien eventually contracted leprosy and died on April 15, 1889 at the age of forty-nine. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 11, 2009.

June 24: Birth of John the Baptist

John the Baptist was a prophet who foretold the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. The Gospel of Luke tells the story of John’s birth. His parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth, were childless and old. The Angel Gabriel appeared to Zachariah and told him Elizabeth would bear a son. Zachariah did not believe this, and he immediately lost his ability to speak (Luke 1:5-25). However, Elizabeth did conceive a baby, and when Elizabeth’s cousin Mary came to visit her, the baby leaped for joy in her womb (Luke 1:44). When Elizabeth gave birth to her baby, Zachariah wrote on a tablet, “His name is John.” Zachariah was then able to speak again (Luke 1:57-66).

July 1: Blessed Junipero Serra

Blessed Junipero Serra founded the Franciscan missions in California in the 18th century. Born in Spain in 1713, he joined the Franciscans at the age of twenty-three. Initially, he was a scholar and teacher, but he later became a missionary in 1749. He was sent first to Mexico City, then to Baja California and finally founded a mission in San Diego, California in 1769. This was the first of twenty-one missions throughout California. These mission centers reached out to the native Indians and also first cultivated European crops in America, such as figs, citrus, grapes, olives and vegetables. Blessed Junipero Serra traveled tirelessly from mission to mission

and is said to have confirmed over 5,000 people. He died at the mission in Carmel in 1784.

July 6: St. Maria Goretti, Virgin and Martyr

Born to a poor farming family in Italy in 1890, Maria Goretti was always known for her piety and her beauty. She was a very good, responsible and religious young girl. Her family were sharecroppers who lived next door to the Serenelli family. Her father died when she was ten. Her mother needed to work on the farm to provide for her young six children. Maria took care of her younger siblings. In 1902, when Maria was twelve, she was attacked and stabbed fourteen times by 19-year-old Alessandro Serenelli. She died two days later. Before she died she went to confession, received Communion and the Sacrament of the Sick. She also forgave Alessandro. Alessandro was sent to prison and years later dreamt of Maria in a garden, again forgiving him and offering him flowers. After that, he repented of his crime. He was released from prison and sought out the forgiveness of Maria's family. Alessandro was even present at her canonization in 1950.

IV. MARY

A. SHRINES TO OUR LADY

1. Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa
Doylestown, PA
2. National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
Washington, D. C.
3. Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Mexico

B. DAYS IN HONOR OF MARY

March 25 Solemnity of the Annunciation

The Annunciation is the feast commemorating the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Mary. The angel told her that she had been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God. Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit, became the Mother of Jesus.

May 31 Feast of the Visitation Luke 1:39-56

The Presentation of Mary is a unique feast day. Although the event is not in the Bible, we learn from other sources that Mary's parents, Ann and Joachim, offered Mary to God in the Temple when she was only three years old. We celebrate this event because it helps us to Lord and obeying His will in all things.

May or June Immaculate Heart of Mary
(Saturday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost)

July 16 Memorial of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Mount Carmel is located on the coast of Israel, north of the city of Haifa. This was the place where the prophet Elijah confronted the pagan prophets of Baal. Around 1154, the Order of Mt. Carmel was founded at this ancient shrine. This contemplative order, called Carmelites, began to celebrate its patronal feast on July 16. According to the tradition of the order, on that day in 1251, Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite in England. She gave him the brown scapular as a sign of her love and protection. A full scapular is a long piece of cloth worn over a religious habit. Today a scapular may be a medal or two pieces of cloth connected by a cord. Carmelites and others who wear the scapular honor the Blessed Mother by wearing it.

August 15 Solemnity of the Assumption

Pope Pius XII, on November 1, 1950, infallibly defined what Catholics always believed: Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven. (CCC #966)

August 22 Memorial of the Queenship of Mary

In 1954, Pope Pius XII established this feast which honors Mary who was crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth by Jesus when she on the day of her Assumption.

VI. SOCIAL JUSTICE

“The Church’s social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society.... In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human life and dignity in our country and around the world, the Gospel of life and the biblical call to justice need to be proclaimed and shared with new clarity, urgency, and energy.”

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching Challenges and Directions, USCC, 1998, p. 4

Major Themes:

**Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
Solidarity of the Human Family
Care for God's Creation**

- A. AWARENESS OF THOSE WHO SUFFER
 - 1. Participate in the Lenten parish / school programs
 - 2. Discuss ways students can help to alleviate problems of hunger, disease, poverty
- B. AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK
 - 1. Discuss ways to show respect for the work of others
 - 2. Determine ways to show appreciation for the jobs of those in the local community
 - 3. Evaluate how homework and home / classroom responsibilities help build respect for the value of work

HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION

In the United States, there are six holydays:

- 1. Mary, Mother of God, January 1
- 2. Ascension Thursday
- 3. Assumption, August 15
- 4. All Saints, November 1
- 5. Immaculate Conception, December 8
- 6. Christmas, December 25

Prayer

The Jesus Prayer

The **Jesus Prayer** is used as a “prayer word” simply by uttering the word “Jesus” or the phrase “Lord, Jesus, have mercy on me” in harmony with one’s breathing. This technique is a help to become “centered” or still within one’s being.

All the various activities in a child’s life can distract her/him from the important task of building a relationship with the all-holy, transcendent God. This *prayer form* is especially helpful if the classroom mood is restless or emotionally charged. It allows you and the children to become still, to become more aware of the Presence of God and to rest in that Presence.

Technique:

Address the children in words similar to these:

1. Let’s settle down and become very quiet so that we can experience God’s Presence here in this room, within us. God is as close to us as our own breath. Now close your eyes and take in a deep breath.
DO THIS WITH THE CHILDREN at this point.
Then, let it out very, very slowly.
2. Now let us breathe and pray all together.
Breathe in. **PAUSE**. Breathe out. **PAUSE**.
Breathe in and pray, “Jesus” or “Lord Jesus.”
Breathe out and pray, “have mercy on me.”

Repeat this as you continue to breathe.

Continue this exercise until you feel the room quiet. Then join the children entrusted to your care in prayer to the God who has loved them - and you - into being.

3. Time: Primary grades: 3 - 4 minutes
Intermediate: 4 - 5 minutes
Upper: 5 - 8 minutes

4. Other Prayer Words that could be used as a substitute:

“Lord Jesus - I love you.”

“Spirit of God - fill me with love.”

Feel free to use your favorite phrases.

Choral Speech (Praying in Common)

This *prayer form* invites all to pray as one voice in response to another through the use of selected religious readings or Scripture. The **Psalms** lend themselves to this type of reading. To develop an understanding of praying in unison, or as reply to another, it is necessary to communicate a sense of rhythm by reading, singing within parts, speaking in different voices.

Examples: “O” antiphons, Canticles (Magnificat, Benedictus), psalms, hymns, prayers, litanies, novena, etc.

Technique:

1. Make copies of the *choral reading* for each of the students.
2. Divide the children into groups and assign the parts to be read in unison rhythmically by each group.
3. Decide if any parts are to be read individually and assign those parts.

Song and Gesture

Singing is particularly popular with young children, but can be used when praying with children of all ages. Gesture helps the children to express their feelings through the use of body language. Combining song and gesture makes for a very expressive prayer form.

Technique:

1. Explain that gesture and song are acceptable *prayer forms*. Prayer is not just rote-recited prayers.
2. Choose a song with gestures with which you are familiar. Listen to the song and teach the gestures to the class.
3. Explain to the children that they are now going to create gestures of their own for a given song.
4. Upon choosing an appropriate hymn for the liturgical season, divide the children into groups. Assign each group a verse of the hymn. Instruct the group to create their own gestures for the assigned verse or chorus.
5. Have each group present their gestures to be learned by the entire class. This song can now be used during a prayer service.

Journal Keeping

This *prayer form* (tool) enables a student to reflect on the goals and directions of his/her life, and to appreciate and deepen a personal relationship with a loving Father. It provides a method to assess these experiences.

Technique: Grades 1 - 3

Journal Keeping could be adapted to the level of the student. Responses could be in written or picture form. Springboards to follow a religion lesson could be:

1. How would you feel if you had been at the Last Supper?
2. How do you think Jesus felt when His friends, the apostles, all walked away from Him?
3. If you were blind, how would you feel if Jesus helped you to see? What would you say to Him?

Grades 4 - 8

1. Present the value of journal-keeping as a means of writing personal thoughts and feelings.
2. Differentiate “diary” from “journal.” A diary records personal thoughts and feelings; a journal records personal feelings and thoughts addressed to God as Father, Jesus as Brother, Friend.
3. There is no one particular format. Journaling may be in the form of an informal letter (Dear Father, from Your son/daughter), (Dear Jesus, from Your pal), or a poem, etc.
4. A copybook should be set aside for this special purpose. This helps to make it a special book for conversations with God.

Discuss the idea of a spiritual journey with students: one in which they will discover things about themselves and God. Ask them to think of pictures, symbols, and words that help them to think about God and the things He has created.

Decorate the cover with pictures and / or words which represent aspects of the student’s self.

Discuss titles that would express the above discussion. Allow each student to design artistically a title page.

5. Establish a quiet atmosphere in the classroom for this special time. As a class, journal several times a week. However, students should feel free to use the journal at any time to express their thoughts and feelings to God.
6. Students need to be assured that no one will read their journals without permission. Periodic evaluation with students can take place to determine effectiveness of journaling.
7. Journaling is a student’s personal response from a springboard initiated by the teacher. Such springboards can come from:
 - the Religion lesson (Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian? What are some signs in your life?)
 - a particular Scripture passage
 - inspirational quotes, such as found on calendars, etc.

- reflections on personal talents, gifts or on those shared with us by others (In your life who reminds you of God and makes you feel special?)
- problems encountered by the age group or within your class, e.g., How does it feel to be left out of a group, to be ignored?

Meditation

Meditation is a form of mental prayer in which one thinks reflectively about God, the Blessed Mother, the saints, or the mysteries of faith.

Technique:

1. Select a Scripture passage. Choose one that is suggested in the Religion textbook.
2. Establish quiet time for approximately two or three minutes before the reading of the passage.
3. Read the passage slowly, aloud or softly. Repeat a word or phrase to capture the attention of the listener.
4. Allow about three or four minutes of quiet time to awaken feelings.
5. Respond with or without words. Remind students of different types of prayer, praise, love, thanksgiving, and petition.

Suggestions for Levels

Primary:

Stress that mental prayer or meditation is listening and talking quietly to God. Encourage students to listen to a selected Scripture story or view a slide presentation or audio-visual reflection. Children should be directed to think about what God is saying to them in this story. Encourage a short response such as the following:

Thank you, God.
I love you, God.
I am sorry, God, etc.

One acclamation should be selected by the child and repeated silently. Allow approximately three minutes for this prayer. Some may choose to share their response with others, to draw a picture of themselves in the Scripture story, or print their short response in their prayer notebook.

Intermediate:

Repeat all or any of the above. Children may write their own prayer. They may volunteer to read their prayer. In order to keep the spirit of prayer, no more than one child's prayer should be read at a given time.

Junior High:

Use any of the above suggestions.

Follow - up activity: Write a modern day story which parallels the Scripture story.

Teacher would ask questions after the meditation such as: Whom would you like to be in the story? Why? What struck you about the story? Why?, etc.

Guided Meditation

Guided Meditation allows the children to consider a Bible verse. It encourages the children to consider their feelings and their relationship with God.

Technique:

1. Call the children to prayer, invite them to be still.
2. When they are still and quiet, invite the children to close their eyes. Remind them to listen very carefully and to try to keep their minds really focused on what you are going to read to them.
3. When they are quiet, read them the story of Jesus blessing the children (Matthew 19: 13 - 15). You may want to read it again after a short pause.
4. Allow a few minutes to pass. Then suggest the children imagine themselves as one of the children whom Jesus blessed. Encourage them to see themselves with Jesus, to imagine where they are. Suggest that they think about how it felt to be near Jesus, how it felt to be sent away from Jesus, and how it felt to be blessed by Jesus. Any ideas of your own would be great!

5. Allow a few minutes for children to consider this. Encourage the children to remember a time when they felt loved and blessed. Who was there? When did this happen? Where did his happen?
6. Older children may be more comfortable seated in a circle facing away from the center.
7. Many other gospel stories lend themselves to guided meditation. For example: The Ten Lepers, Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, or the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Follow Up:

Primary: Draw what you imagined. Write a prayer thanking Jesus for his blessing.

Intermediate: Discuss the blessings they have received. Write a prayer thanking God for these blessings.

Junior High: Journal their feelings during this meditation. Discuss times when you have not felt loved or blessed. Discuss how to help others feel loved and blessed.

Shared Prayer

This *prayer form* helps the students to become more aware and sensitive to God's presence in their lives and in the world around them and to aid them in responding to that presence by sharing prayer with others. This prayer may be spontaneous by having them respond to a few questions relating to a passage read from scripture, or it may take on a more structured format such as creating a litany or the format of the *Prayer of the Faithful* in the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Technique:

1. Take the time to create a prayerful environment. In some way, make a conscious effort to change the area from what the students ordinarily experience. Prepare the students by setting a tone of quiet reverence.
2. For **Intermediate** or **Junior High** levels select one of the students to do the reading of the Scripture passage. Give him/her the selection ahead of time and

have him/her carefully prepared, read slowly, etc. For **Primary** levels, it may be best to do the reading yourself. You may want to use a children's Bible for easier understanding.

3. During the Lenten Season, we take on a new awareness of Jesus' life in the light of His passion, death, and His new life in glory. Select a passage from one of the Gospels on the passion of Jesus.
4. Allow for a period of silent reflection following the reading.
5. For **Primary** levels, prepare beforehand materials needed for drawing: paper, crayons, markers, etc. Have the children draw a picture of the story and then describe what they drew. You may aid them by asking a few questions, e.g. How do you think Jesus felt when the crowd mocked him and his close friends deserted him? Have they ever felt that no one cared?
6. For the **Intermediate** and **Junior High** levels, prior to the prayer experience, it will be necessary to prepare the students by familiarizing them with the formula used for the *General Intercessions* at Mass.
7. Help them to move from the time of Jesus to our own time. In the reflection on the passion of Jesus we are able to see that we are not alone in our suffering. When we condemn others because of race, color, or religion we are repeating the action of Pilate. Mary's sorrow today is shared by the families of sons and daughters of all the war-torn nations of the world. Reflected in Jesus' innocence are the innocent children in famine-afflicted countries, etc.
8. Invite them to write a prayer about one of the many concerns of our world today. These can be put together to be used as a *Prayer of the Faithful*.