

Grade 2

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHISTS

Know Your Audience

Just like Jesus, every good catechist knows their audience.

“The catechist – must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way.” (NDC #48)

Who Are Your Second Graders?

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- ❖ Grow in their relationship with God particularly through prayer based on life experience.
- ❖ Vest great authority in parents and other trusted adults.
- ❖ Desire to join in the ritual of the parish community as seen in the desire to participate in Penance and Eucharist.
- ❖ Need help in formation of conscience.
- ❖ Begin to sort out reality from imagination based on practical experience.
- ❖ Need concrete experiences to understand concepts and religious truths.
- ❖ Use classes and categories to order actions around them.
- ❖ Can begin to project themselves imaginatively into the position/situation of others.
- ❖ Begin to order the religious world.
- ❖ View rules as inflexible.
- ❖ Understand reality best in story form.
- ❖ Identify with heroes and heroines of the Bible.
- ❖ Identify with the stories of the Church (lives of saints for example).
- ❖ Desire to learn about people and their differences.
- ❖ Accept attitudes of parents, teachers, the Church, and other social institutions toward differences in people.

Grade 2 Catechists

Guiding Principles

Catechists should:

- Bear in mind children's tendency to confuse past and present experiences because they are still limited in their sense of history and time. Clarify the differences - clarification is especially significant when introducing them to the examination of conscience. Need to assist children in sorting out what is real and relevant to the current examination of conscience, because they generally live in the present.
- Show children love in action and attitude, consistently building them up with praise, recognition, and appreciation for the children to understand their personal value.
- Help children form their consciences. Be careful to react consistently to an action, incident, or situation. (The children will realize that there are differences between what is dangerous, what is improper, what is annoying, what is accidental, and what is sinful).
- Help to prepare the children to understand the forgiveness of God. Concentrate on the reality of God's love and mercy as a tremendous gift which God gives to us. Begin to develop a sense of sin and wrong doing.
- Set an example for the formation of the children's values through their personal relationship with God, desire for union with God in prayer, and appreciation of the sacraments manifested through frequent reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Begin to master "things."
- Develop "control" of language.
- Develop body skills.
- Become orderly.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Begin to develop real social awareness, but are still somewhat centered on "self."
- Begin to develop sense of "community"; accept responsibility to do their part in classroom and home tasks, if assigned according to ability; realize that each person's task is important to the group.
- Can experience adults outside of family as important "bridges" to move into the world.
- Find it difficult to accept decisions of group when different from one's own.

- Can begin to dialogue in small group discussions as opposed to just responding one-on-one to teacher directed questions.
- Are upset by negative comments, especially from someone in authority.
- Exhibit curiosity and enthusiasm for life.
- Boys and girls may prefer to sit/work in separate groups.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Children at this age:

- Are able to think logically about concrete, real objects or experiences they have known for the most part.
- Learn best by doing, showing, and experiencing.
- Are not ready for interpersonal dialogue.
- Have difficulty seeing things through another person's point of view.
- Tend to have their perceptions dominated by their own viewpoints.
- Begin to generalize.
- Set standards which are often too high for themselves (which lead to disappointment if the activity proves too difficult).

For more information regarding curriculum or the faith development of children, please visit the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Christian Formation website <http://www2.richmonddiocese.org/ocf/> or email us at cf@richmonddiocese.org.

NOTES

- ❖ Pope John Paul II in **On Catechesis in Our Time** encourages the use of advances in pedagogy; biology, sociology as they help us to model God's Divine Pedagogy (teaching us gradually in stages according to our level of development). The above noted information is consistent with such documents as the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Catechetical Documents of the Church.
- ❖ The above sciences have limitations. While this information does provide references to typical age ranges, children continue to be viewed as individuals and individual differences need to be taken into account.

