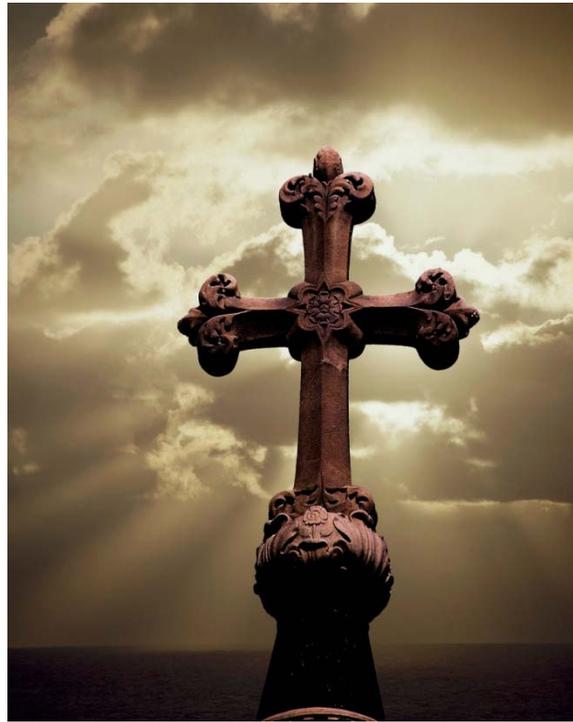


**Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools**

**BEST PRACTICES  
FOR  
TEACHING RELIGION**



**Developed by:  
The California Catholic School Superintendents  
Curriculum Committee (CCSSCC)**

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## **INITIAL CONCLUSIONS REGARDING EFFECTIVE TEACHER METHODOLOGY IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGION**

1. Based upon school In-Depth Studies (Religion), WCEA Self-Study Accreditation Process and diocesan personnel school site visitations, it is felt that the vast majority of schools have overall strong religion programs.
2. There is a variance within a school as to the utilization of “best” practices by all teachers. Some teachers are more traditional in their approach to the teaching of religion.
3. New teachers coming into a school lack the training in methodology in teaching religion. They also have a tendency to be weaker in their theology due to their educational and life experience background.
4. Ongoing in-servicing in teacher methodology for the teaching of religion needs to be made available to both new and veteran teachers.
5. It is felt that schools need to continually think “beyond their own box” in relation to teacher practices that would be more effective. Striving to make effective use of faith experiences, social justice outreach and assessment of knowledge of the Catholic faith will benefit both the catechesis and faith formation of students.
6. The use of the ACRE results can be beneficial in relation to evaluating the knowledge level of students as can be other research based outcome assessments and observation of student behavior.

# UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD<sup>1</sup>

*By Gini Shimabukuro, Ed.D.*

Essential to the building of a gospel-based learning community is the sincere, ongoing effort to understand each child. This understanding permits the educator to fulfill the Christian call to formation and transformation of learners.

Since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's, Church documentation related to education offers insight into this concept through the "integral formation" of the child. "Integral formation" refers to teaching that fosters the unification of the many aspects of the child—spiritual, moral, religious, intellectual, developmental, social, emotional physical—and to learning that enables the child to make necessary connections among these interior dimensions.

Effective formation, then, precludes an awareness of these many human dimensions as active in the learning process and of their relationship to each other: emotional with religious, intellectual with physical, moral with developmental, and so on.

In order to achieve this holistic goal of learning that is integrated and formative, it is necessary to understand that teaching is more than mere transmission of knowledge. We need to design content-based processes that will empower the child to internalize his or her learning.

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<sup>1</sup> **Resources:** Groome, Thomas, *Educating for Life*. Allen, Texas: Thomas More Publishing Co. 1998:

The Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988

# WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION FACTORS

## CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND IN-DEPTH

### **Accreditation Factor #3: Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity**

*The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing authentic Catholic teaching<sup>2</sup>, opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.*

#### **Catholic Identity Standards:**

- 1. Mission & Philosophy:** The school's mission and philosophy statements reflect the integration of our faith into all aspects of school life.
- 2. Prayer & Sacraments:** The whole school community is involved in a variety of prayer experiences. Sacramental reception is scheduled on a regular basis. Students and staff have opportunities to participate in a spiritual retreat.
- 3. Curriculum:** The Religion curriculum is based on Arch/diocesan standards, assessments are connected to the standards and progress reporting is based on the standards. Any texts used by the teachers meet USCCB requirements.
- 4. Catechist Certification:** All who teach Religion have valid, current catechist certification, or are in the process of obtaining such certification within the timeline established by the Arch/diocese.
- 5. Parents as Partners:** The school maintains an active partnership with parents in the education of their children.
- 6. Service:** Students have opportunities to provide service to the parish, school and civic communities.
- 7. Signs and Sacramentals:** Signs and symbols of our Catholic faith are prominently displayed throughout the school. Catholic traditions and practices are observed throughout the year at appropriate times.
- 8. Evangelization:** All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

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<sup>2</sup> Catechesis: An education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Chapter 5; pp. 426-427)

**The annual In-Depth Study for Religion has been replaced by the Ongoing Review of a school's Catholic Identity. See Appendix G-1 and G-2 for details on how this Review is conducted. The timeline for the ongoing review is listed below.**

**Timeline:**

- Year One: This is the year that the school begins the Self Study (i.e., the school year prior to the WCEA accreditation visit). The school assesses itself on all eight standards of Catholic Identity as indicated in the protocol (Chapter 3-A) using the Discussion Questions and writing points found in the protocol.
- Year Two: This is the year that the school has a WCEA accreditation visit. The school does not assesses itself on any Catholic Identity standards.
- Year Three: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 4 and 8.
- Year Four: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 3 and 6.
- Year Five: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 1 and 5.
- Year Six: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 2 and 7. [Note: this should be an internal survey by school staff – not a parent/student survey]

## BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING RELIGION

### CRITERIA AND INDICATOR TEACHER REFERENCE

#### 1. Teacher Preparation

- a. *Materials/Equipment/Technology/Resources* – Teacher does not rely solely on material in the textbook; uses supplementary material such as books, media, etc. with creativity and care in order to achieve the objective of the lesson.

##### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer corner/setting
- Approved diocesan textbooks
- Church documents
- Whiteboard/SMART board
- Audio-visual equipment/technology
- Guest speaker – DRE/Priest/Pastor or Pastoral Coordinator
- References/supportive resource materials
- Manipulative materials and supplies (felt boards, puzzles, clay, crayons etc.)
- Liturgical Calendar
- Colored Cloths relating to the liturgical season
- Sacramentals – Rosary, crucifix, holy water, statues of saints, etc.
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd/Atrium Model

- b. *Variety of Activities Planned* – Teacher uses a wide variety of age-appropriate activities related to the aim of the lesson and appropriate to the level of faith development of the student.

##### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer experience
- Classroom discussion (large & small group)
- Games—(i.e. biblical “bingo”)
- Whiteboard/SMART board/LCD projection
- PowerPoint/smart board/DVD

- Role play
  - Projects (individual/groups)
  - Oral/silent reading
  - Manipulative materials
  - Lectures
  - Management activities (Classroom management)
  - Explanations including questions/answers
  - Music/Dance
- c. *Lesson Plan/Objectives/Procedures* – Teacher has a lesson plan that demonstrates thoroughness and resourcefulness in preparation of content, learning activities, materials and equipment.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Written lesson plan
  - Materials ready for student use
  - Equipment set up and ready
  - Smooth flow from activity to activity
  - Time given for teacher reflection
- d. *Physical Set-up of Environment* – As much as possible, the teacher sets an environment that is conducive to individual and group learning. Physical environment is attractive, welcoming and comfortable. Room arrangement and prayer table are creative and relate to the objective/theme of lesson.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer table/corner
- Bulletin board(s) reflective of Catholic identity/curriculum
- Clearly displayed religious symbols

## 2. Catholic/Christian Information/Instruction

- a. *Development of Content* – Teacher shows knowledge in area being taught. Approach is sequential, age appropriate and effective. Movement from one segment of the lesson to another is smooth. Teacher does not need to refer to the text frequently.

### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Variety of activities
- Subject matter covered (utilize Diocesan Religion Standards/Guidelines)
- Objectives of lesson plan met
- Resources used (e.g. church documents, approved supplemental materials)
- Student involvement

- b. *Prayer* – Teacher provides opportunities for creative prayer, formal or informal relating to the lesson or liturgical season. This includes the beginning and ending prayer.

### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Variety of prayer experiences observed in classroom
- Prayer is frequent
- Listen and responding to scripture
- Prayer corners form a central part of classroom environment

- c. *Student Inquiry/Participation* – Students are attentive and motivated. Their participation is encouraged within individual and group activities through a variety of ways.

### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Activities Used for Student Involvement
- Cooperative learning
- Center activities
- Collaboration: discussion/sharing faith/prayer/intentions/spontaneous prayer
- Sacred gestures
- Prayerful dance
- Liturgical rituals

- Role playing
- Partner reading/studying
- Discussion: large/small
- Teacher-led question/answer
- Activities used for student inquiry
- Research/group discussion/peer-to-peer
- Resources used to enrich activities

d. *Recognition of Learning Styles/Age-Appropriate Development* – The teacher provides age-appropriate activities which include different learning styles to help students to use their talents and abilities.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Age appropriate activities/multi-sensory activities/multiple intelligences learning opportunities
- Ways of addressing learning difficulties
- Multiple activities recognizing different talents/abilities
- Optional pathways to a conclusion permitted and encouraged
- Peer teaching/peer interaction
- Teacher with small groups or one-on-one
- Review of previous lesson and “tie-in” within this lesson
- Seating arrangement

e. *Integration of Message into Life Experience* – The teacher makes a strong tie between scripture, doctrine and students’ life experiences. The teacher relates materials and activities to current issues according to the lesson objective.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Listen and respond to scripture
- Paraphrase prayers in personal words
- Compose prayers and petitions
- Identification of saints and the impact of their lives on today
- Define lawful authority in society
- Show concern for needs of others
- Be aware of family customs and cultures
- Recognize that sexuality is a gift from God
- Develop an awareness that life is a gift from God

- Demonstrate how stewardship is an integral part of Christian living
- Identify various types of ministry within the Church

f. *Application to Life* – The teacher is able to relate classroom lesson to life and society.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Quotes that demonstrate correlation (student and teacher)
- Activities which explore correlation
- Materials which challenge students' curiosity about relevance in one's life— expansion of Church teaching into current issues facing society (cloning, euthanasia, abortion)
- Questions/answers encouraged from students
- Role playing—“What would Jesus Do” situations
- Small group investigations—relating Church doctrines to text material and current event issues
- Directed reading
- Pictures/books/display/ news clippings/videos
- Community service projects
- Field trips to homeless shelters, convalescent homes
- Field experiences to places of other faith traditions and experiences (Holocaust museum, synagogue)

g. *Culminating Activities* – The teacher is able to bring the lesson to closure by integrating evaluation with a meaningful summarization or activity.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Time allotted for reflection throughout the lesson itself
- Statements of summary from the catechist and teacher, and the students
- Resources to culminate lesson (video/music/poetry/prayer, etc.)
- Assignment to reinforce concepts covered in the lesson

### 3. Assessment

a. *Formal and Informal Assessments* – Monitor student learning of developmentally appropriate student learning objectives. This measure of progress should be frequent and integrated into the teaching and learning process through the use of

in-class activities, question/answer, and more formal assessment of acquired learning of content based objectives.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Active and engaged participation
- Homework, handout completion
- Practice of prayer (recitation)
- Contribution to discussions in class
- Dioramas, posters, reports
- Role-playing activities—scripture passages etc.
- Journal responses internalizing faith knowledge and internalization
- Quizzes, tests, oral assessments
- Technology projects/online use of religious sites
- Regular attendance at Mass
- Participating in singing, liturgical dance, etc.

- b. *Formative and Summative Assessments* – Monitor student learning objectives and religion program in light of content mastery, skill acquisition, and experienced faith development. This measure of evaluation will assess teachers to refine their planning and methodology as well as determine resources for future growth and faith internalization.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- On-going survey of teachers, parents, students
- Analysis of ACRE assessment results
- Diocesan content standards assessment
- Portfolio assessment
- Rubric assessment
- Projects
- Student response to outreach activities
- Teacher designed test matching religion curriculum and taught objectives
- Textbook assessment
- Essay questions
- Faith sharing activities

#### 4. Supervision

- a. *Student Cooperation and Self Regulation* – The teacher maintains a positive atmosphere in which students work well in individual or group activities. Time is used effectively. Order is maintained and self-discipline is being developed.

##### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Classroom rules are posted
- Students demonstrate self-discipline/on-task behavior
- Catechist statement to students are positive, empowering, collaborative
- Activities toward self-direction
- Spoken/unspoken intervention of inappropriate behavior
- Flexibility
- Positive movement of students from one activity to another
- Minimum friction and interruption

#### 5. Relational

- a. *Interaction: Peer to Peer* – The teacher provides an environment which results in mutual support, trust, and respect from student to student as faith community is being built.

##### OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Students are actively engaged in integrating their faith with each other through classroom activities
- Students participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacrament
- Evidence of cooperation in a faith centered learning activity
- Students show mutual interest/ attention to each other's responses
- Collaborative teams stay on task, support each other and successfully complete project
- All students actively participate in sharing their own special talents to a project
- Cross age mentoring is apparent (school families) for faith activities and sharing.

- b. *Interaction: Teacher-to-Student* – The teacher is able to establish a positive rapport with the students, individually and collectively, resulting in high morale as faith community is being built.

OBSERVABLE DATA

- Statements of encouragement and affirmation – student to the teacher and from the teacher to the student
- Personal knowledge of each student (interests, abilities/family, etc.)
- Student's contributions are accepted by the teacher and other students
- An atmosphere of mutual respect (mutual statements of courtesy, etc.) is maintained
- Discipline is always done with respect to the individual and its outcome is designed to be formative in establishing a pattern for more positive behavior.
- Teacher serves as a faith role model

# BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING RELIGION

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

### **Teacher Preparation:**

A teacher who is well prepared has taken the first foundational step to successfully educating children and youth in the Catholic faith. Faith and spiritual development is an ongoing process that begins before we can speak and ends when we take our last breath. Just because we have taken on the title of “teacher” does not mean that we have completed our education in the faith. We, as teachers/catechists, must constantly strive to know more and further enrich our own faith journey by investigating and indulging in the resources available to us.

The list and suggestions provided below are only a few of the many resources available to you. Your parish may have a resource library on site, or your Arch/diocese may have resources available at the Pastoral Center. Ask your Director of Religious Education or Principal where you can go to check out materials that will assist you in your role as catechist. Remember to search the Internet for online resources as well.

Supplemental to written references, other materials will support the learning taking place in your classroom. Puzzles, felt board stories, bulletin board pictures, statues, holy cards, and many more items can be attained through textbook publishers or religious goods suppliers. A copy of the liturgical calendar would be a helpful addition to your classroom. Colored cloths in the liturgical colors (green, white, purple, red) can be obtained at any fabric shop. Construction paper would even work to cover a prayer table or bulletin board with the color of the liturgical season. In this way, your students will become familiar with the cycle of the church year.

### **RESOURCES:**

The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (2006)

Called to Be a Catechist – Your Practical Guide by Cullen W. Schippe (2005)

The National Directory for Catechesis by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005)

What Do I Do Now? A Guide for the Reluctant Catechist by Dan Pierson and Susan Stark (2005)

The Courage to Lead: Catholic Identity and Diversity by James L. Heft, SM, and Gordon D. Bennett, SJ, DD (2004)

Perspectives on Leadership and Catechesis by Robert I. Colbert and Janice A. Kraus (2001)

Updated May, 2014

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The General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English – A Summary and Commentary by Bill Huebsch (2001)

A Call to Reflection: A Teacher’s Guide to Catholic Identity for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by Gini Shimabukuro, Ed.D. (1998)

General Directory for Catechesis by United States Catholic Conference (1997)

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry by National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1997)

The Catechetical Documents by Liturgy Training Publications (1996)

Catechism of the Catholic Church by United States Catholic Conference (1994)

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School by Congregation for Catholic Education (1988)

To Teach As Jesus Did by National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1972)

### **SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING RELIGION**

**National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools** (2012) by Lorraine Ozar and Task Force

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults + Reader’s Journal** (2006) USCCB

**The Catholic Prayer Bible (Lectio Divina Edition)** published by Paulist Press

**Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church** (2011) published by Ignatius Press

**Forming Intentional Disciples (the path to knowing and following Jesus)** (2012) published by Sunday Visitor

**Rediscover Catholicism (a spiritual guide to living with passion and purpose)** by Matthew Kelly published by Beacon Publishing (2010)

**The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic** by Matthew Kelly published by Beacon Publishing (2012)

**The Catholic Source Book** published by Harcourt Religion (2007)

**The Scripture Source Book** published by Harcourt Religion (2008)

**Websites to explore:** These sites will link you to hundreds of other sources.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

National Catholic Educational Association [www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org)

California Catholic Conference [www.cacatholic.org](http://www.cacatholic.org)

Vatican [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

Catholic – USA [www.catholic-usa.com](http://www.catholic-usa.com)

Catholic Sites [www.catholicsites.com](http://www.catholicsites.com)

Catholic Mom [www.catholicmom.com](http://www.catholicmom.com)

[www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org)

[www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

[www.build.plant.grow.org](http://www.build.plant.grow.org)  
[www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)  
[www.catholic-kids.com](http://www.catholic-kids.com)  
[www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)  
[www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)  
[www.catholicicing.com](http://www.catholicicing.com)  
[www.catholicteacherresources.com](http://www.catholicteacherresources.com)  
[www.harcourtreligion.com](http://www.harcourtreligion.com)  
[www.integratedcatholiclife.com](http://www.integratedcatholiclife.com)  
[www.lessonplanet.com](http://www.lessonplanet.com)  
[www.thereligionteacher.com](http://www.thereligionteacher.com)

### **Variety of Activities Planned:**

When preparing to teach a lesson, it is important to remember that students learn in multiple ways. Three of the basic ways in which people learn are *cognitively* – gaining knowledge by absorbing facts and content through listening, seeing/reading, and writing; *affectively* – gaining knowledge through feelings and attitudes; and *behaviorally* – gaining knowledge through actions and experience. Ideally, you want to present a religion lesson in such a way that all of these areas can be addressed. Do not be afraid to infuse your lesson with a variety of activities that will appeal to several learning styles. The goal is to encourage your students to seek, accept, and integrate the Catholic Christian message more fully into their daily lives. Effective religious education goes beyond knowing the facts and truths of the Catholic Church; it is putting those truths in action on a daily basis. Page 22 will discuss how to create meaningful lesson plans for your students.

### **Classroom Management:**

To be an effective catechist, you must be able to control a classroom in such a way that students are free to learn without disrupting others. This is more than a discipline plan. Discipline is part of classroom management, but classroom management is more about clearly stating the behavioral expectations and outlining classroom procedures so that discipline will not become an “issue” that distracts from the presented lesson.

Students work to their greatest potential when they have a structure to follow that provides reasonable limits allowing them to grow and experience the lesson, while expressing their thoughts and ideas in an environment that is not disruptive or

offensive to others. The following steps will allow you to develop a classroom management system that maximizes the learning potential for your students.

Know Your Students – What are the students' likes and dislikes? What activities do they participate in outside of school? What skills or talents do they have? Is the student experiencing changes in their family structure? Does the student have any learning/physical problems that might affect behavior or performance?

Many of these questions can be answered through a casual, friendly call to parents introducing you as the child's catechist. You want to be careful not to pry too personally into the family situation, but rather express yourself as a partner with the parents in the child's faith development. Parents need to know you, as catechist, are willing to assist when and as you are needed. Information on students can also be gathered by asking the students directly through surveys sheets or casual conversation. Even though you are trying to better understand your students, it is important to remember that you are not the student's friend or peer – you are an adult teacher and must act accordingly.

Mutual Respect – How do you respond to students' questions or responses? How are students greeted as they arrive for class? How does the teacher dismiss students to leave after class? Do you foster a sense of security and care for your students? Are students required to address adults and other students with respect and dignity? Is diversity celebrated within the classroom?

Focusing on these questions will support the climate that will be present within the classroom. Students who believe that their teacher likes and respects them will be motivated to respond with respect and perform to the best of their ability. It is important to stress the value of respect at the very first class meeting. State the expectations and establish the procedural practices for your classroom right away. Keep the rules simple and state them in a positive tone. For example, instead of saying, "Don't use put-down or bad language," state, "Use kindness in your words and actions," or "Treat others with respect at all times." Do not set too many restrictions for the students; keep the rules general to cover many situations. It is best to allow the students to participate in establishing the rules. In this way, they are mutually owned and understood by all members of the classroom community. Students should also understand the consequences for not following the rules before any are broken. Make consequences that are clear, enforceable and age-appropriate. Constantly reward good behavior with verbal praise or gestures (a smile, a nod of the head, a pat on the back). Once rules and consequences are established make sure they are visible in the

classroom at all times, well-communicated and understood by all, and that they are consistently followed.

When considering the climate you want to establish in your classroom, it is also important to set up procedures for routine events. How is a child dismissed to use the restroom? How are papers/supplies to be passed out and collected? What is the appropriate way in which to answer a question; throw trash away; or get a Kleenex? What is the proper way to enter and exit the classroom? Which way do we exit in case of an emergency? These are all questions that need to be answered in the teacher's/catechist's mind before the first class. The students need to be aware of the classroom procedures at the first class meeting to avoid confusion and disruptions to the lesson.

Preparation for Class – Is the lesson plan well-written? Do I have all the supplies I need for the lesson activities? What prayers will I be using? What will I do with the students who come early? What will I do with the students who finish early? What will I do if the lesson finishes earlier than expected? What do I do if the children do not understand? Does the lesson include a variety of activities that will capture the students' attention?

If the teacher/catechist is well-prepared and organized the students will be more likely to exhibit good behavior. When a teacher's attention is drawn away from students, students are left to do as they please. Lessons should keep students active and engaged. A wise teacher will have a reserve of activities (puzzles, worksheets, games, songs, and books) to use in the case when a lesson finishes earlier than expected, or a student finishes the activity earlier than others. Discipline problems can be avoided when students are actively engaged in the lesson.

Familiarity with Program Guidelines – How are the students dropped off for class? Are parents required to sign children out of class? What do I do if a student becomes ill during class? Is there a policy regarding homework? Is there a discipline policy already established for the parish/school? What areas within the campus are "off-limits" to students?

It is important that you become familiar with the policies and procedures adopted by the parish/school before a problem arises. The school or parish program guidelines allow you to know the expectations placed on teachers/catechists, parents and students. The classroom discipline program you establish in your classroom should support the

rules, guidelines, and philosophy set up by the school or parish program. The Principal or Director of Religious Education (DRE) is there to assist you in facilitating an effective classroom climate for the students.

When a Problem Occurs – When should I investigate a problem? Should the parents be called? How can I get this student to stop being disruptive? If I discipline the student, am I hurting his/her self-esteem? How did I lose control of this class?

There will come a time when a student will challenge your authority, or disregard classroom rules. An effective way to correct a poor choice of behavior is to: 1) Address the problem directly (unless this is a whole class problem, it is best to handle this in a way that respects the student's privacy. This will allow the student to be corrected without public humiliation.); 2) Inform the student that the behavior was not appropriate and reference the classroom rule that was broken; 3) Explain the consequence that will happen or that must happen as a result of the behavior choice; 4) Have the student recap what you said so you are sure he/she understands.

If a student continues to exhibit poor choices, or shows disregard for the rules, ask for assistance from the Principal or DRE. It may be necessary to contact parents if a child continues to create a distraction in the classroom. The Principal or DRE can assist you in handling this type of situation.

### **Prayer Experience:**

One of the most important elements of faith that you will assist your students in developing is a prayer life. Children and youth need to know how to communicate one-on-one with God, and how to come together as a community of believers in prayer.

Many books are available on this topic that appeal across the age levels. The basic forms of prayer are the *traditional* – memorized prayers that can be found in the back of the religion text and in Catholic prayer books (Eucharist, Benediction, and the Rosary are traditional prayers); *spontaneous* – these are prayers that come from the heart, conversations with God that are spoken aloud; *guided meditations* – a prayer in which the teacher/leader verbally guides the class through imagery with a set goal/lesson/destination in mind; *contemplative* – prayer that centers around deep thought on one object or scriptural passage; *echo prayer* – the students repeat what is spoken by the teacher (this is especially popular with younger students); *liturgical movement or dance* – prayer that is accompanied by appropriate symbolic movements;

and *song* – King David sang his prayers to God constantly. Find some appropriate songs and ask your students to really mean it when they sing. Prayer is communication with God. Anyway the students can communicate can be a form of prayer.

The following are a few books that can get you started on integrating prayer throughout your lessons.

**\*\* (Refer back to pages 16-17 in this document):**

Blessed Are You: A Prayerbook for Catholics by Gwen Costello (2003)

Prayers for Feasts by Charles Singer (2002)

Bless This Day by Patricia Mathson (2002)

600 Blessings and Prayers from Around the World by Geoffrey Duncan (2001)

In My Heart Room by Mary Terese Donze (1982/1990/1998)

Praying With the Saints by Gwen Costello (1999)

Jesus, Teach Me to Pray: A Catholic Child's Prayerbook by Alison Berger (1999)

The Stewardship Rosary by International Stewardship Council, Inc. (1999)

Prayer Services for Catechist and Teacher Meetings by Gwen Costello (1998)

30 Rituals and Prayer Services for Catechist and Teacher Meetings by Alison J. Berger (1989)

### **Questioning Techniques:**

Class participation is crucial to an effective lesson. Students usually fall into three general categories: 1) *the dominators* – these are the students who are sure of themselves and usually have the correct response; they are not afraid to risk the having the wrong answer and thus are usually first to raise their hands; 2) *the reluctant participators* – these are the students who will participate if they have to; they are usually afraid of ridicule or having the incorrect answer; 3) *the non-participators* – these are students who do not want to be in class; they do not want to share an opinion or attempt an answer. Each group has its own challenges when presenting a lesson. One way to assure that all students given an opportunity to respond to a question, the teacher can require students to reflectively pause before raising their hands to give an answer. This is something that seems awkward at first, but with training and practice can be beneficial to student learning. Before asking a question, tell the students that they cannot raise their hand to respond until you give them a “signal.” The signal can be counting to five with your hand, or when you say, “Answers, please.” Another way to encourage student participation in discussion is to ask the question and have the students share their answer with a specific person sitting near them. It is important that responses are positively affirmed. This will encourage increased participation as class continues.

In order to maximize student participation, the following strategies can be used: 1) Prepare your questions in advance – write questions for the concepts you want to reinforce throughout the lesson. Refer to the teacher’s manual for assistance. Do not rely on adlibbing questions as the class progresses. This can cause confusion with the students. 2) Use an opinion question to begin the discussion – opinion questions allow students to participate without the fear of being wrong. 3) Vary the types of questions you ask – fact questions, opinion questions, “can you give an example” questions, questions that draw on prior experience, prediction questions, review questions, comparison questions, difficult and easy questions.

### **Lesson Planning:**

Teacher’s edition of the textbook will outline the lesson for you and give several suggestions and references on how to present the lesson. Usually, more information is given in the teacher’s edition than you will be able to present. It is important that you carefully choose and plan the lesson you will present to the students. You will want to make the lesson your own. The students must see that you believe and have passion for what you are teaching. You, as teacher/catechist, must always be aware that you are teaching the Catholic faith and traditions as the Bishop would – you are not to teach the “Catholic Church according to your ideas.” If you do not know an answer to a student’s question, it is always acceptable and correct to say, “That is a really good question. I will have to look into that for you.” We are all life-long learners on this faith journey – you do not need to know everything off the top of your head.

A lesson plan should be written so that anyone could come into your class and teach the concepts, text pages, and activities in your place. The lesson should contain four parts: *experience*, *message*, *discovery*, and *response*. To incorporate these elements you should have an outline written as to how your class will proceed. Do not rely on the textbook to teach the class for you. The textbook is a tool. You make the concepts *real* for the students.

Before meeting the students for class, carefully consider the four elements mentioned above by planning your lesson. The preliminary step is to determine the aim/objective of the lesson. What do you want the students to learn, and how will you know that they learned it? This can be written in one or two sentences. After the aim is determined, the teacher/catechist can plan how to get students to *experience* this concept in their own lives. This can be achieved through discussion, guided reflection, role-playing, situation

games, or reflection on the student's prior knowledge. The next step of the lesson is presenting the *message*. This is the core of the lesson. It can be told by going through the textbook pages and activities, storytelling, lecture, Scripture reading, drama, technology, DVD, music, and by many other means. The *discovery* element of the lesson ties the lesson content to the student's personal experience. The purpose of discovery is to make the lesson/concept purpose-filled for the students – something they can really use on a daily basis. This part of the lesson can be enhanced by questions and answers, personal experience, imagining, and reflection exercises. The *response* section of the lesson gives students an opportunity to act or practice the concept taught. Effective expressions of response are prayer, music, writing, art projects, celebration, and most especially service. The goal of Catholic Christian education is to take the concepts learned and apply them to everyday living with the hope of building the Kingdom of God today.

### **Physical Environment:**

The physical environment you create for your students is extremely important to student achievement. The classroom environment needs to be welcoming and conducive to good learning. No one can learn in a distracting, unorganized or chaotic environment. This can be challenging for classroom teachers who share a classroom everyday with the religious education program, and for the catechist who uses the classroom space once a week to fit the needs of the students he/she is blessed to teach. The following are tips that can be used to make sharing the space more practical.

Create a plan of how you want your classroom to look. How do you want the desks to be arranged? Where will the students gather for prayer? Is there some floor space available for small group activities? Once you have a plan, discuss the classroom set up with the teachers using the room. The classroom teacher who uses the room on a daily basis should have a floor plan of how the classroom needs to be assembled each morning. The catechist using the room in the evening or over the weekend will need the room put back into place for classes the next morning. It may help to label desks with a code (numbers or colored dots) so that placing the desks back in the correct order can be accomplished with ease.

**Prayer Tables/Corners:**

A prayer corner or table should be part of every Catholic Christian classroom. This is a small area that serves as a focal point for devotions or prayer. The table has a cloth on it. The cloth can be changed to reflect the liturgical season. For example a green cloth would cover the table during Ordinary Time, a white cloth would be used during Christmas and Easter Seasons, a purple cloth could be used during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Typically, the table would have an age-appropriate Bible, a rosary, a battery operated candle, Mary statue, and a crucifix. The teacher/catechist may add items such as holy cards, pictures, flowers, seashells, loaves of bread, wheat stalks, chalice-type cups, etc. depending on the content of the lesson or the season of the year. The items could be easily transported if the prayer table could not be a permanent fixture in the room.

Every classroom should have a bulletin board that focuses on the religious theme being taught. Classroom teachers have this element readily available to them. Catechists have more of a challenge with this. Science display boards (sold in office supply or craft stores) make wonderful bulletin boards for religious education classes. These boards stand up by themselves and have plenty of room to display student work or prayer petitions. Students can write their prayer petitions on Post-It Notes and put them on the display board, or the response to a question or drawing can be put on these notes to decorate the “instant” bulletin board as well. Post-It Notes also come in chart paper size. Students can color, paint, or glue items right to these papers. The large Post-It papers can then be “stuck” to any surface to create your own class bulletin board. These papers are easy to remove, too. Teacher editions of the textbooks will sometimes give ideas for bulletin board themes. Religious goods stores have ready-made bulletin board materials available.

**Recognition of Learning Styles/Age-Appropriate Development:**

Not all children learn in the same way, nor do they express what they know in the same way. As catechists, we are assisting to develop a very important part of a child – the spiritual and faith elements of their being. Thus, it is important that we use a variety of ways to convey the message of faith presented in the lessons.

Howard Gardner has identified several distinct “intelligences” that allow students to understand and relate to the world around them. These “intelligences” include: verbal, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, spatial, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Students who prefer the verbal form of intelligence enjoy expressing

themselves in writing – they excel in journaling, providing a written answer, or writing a story on a specified topic. Logical/mathematical students enjoy working with puzzles and solving riddles to learn new information. Kinesthetic students prefer expressing their knowledge through movement, dance, hand gestures, or any activity that involves moving from one location to another. Students who prefer musical intelligence learn well through music, song and rhythm. Spatially intelligent students enjoy learning when they can fit the “pieces” of the lesson together and can identify how the “pieces” are interconnected. Students with naturalistic intelligence learn new ideas by relating them to nature. Interpersonal students enjoy learning by interacting with others. They like to discuss a situation and work with others on a solution or before formulating their own opinion or analysis of the situation. Intrapersonal students need to have quiet time to themselves to process the information given. They would prefer to work alone rather than with others.

It is important that when catechists are planning lessons that they keep in mind the various intelligences in which their students learn and express their knowledge best – will challenging the students to explore and develop the other realms of intelligence.

Meeting the diverse needs of the students you are blessed to serve can also be addressed in your attentiveness to students while they are present in your class. It is important that the catechist walk throughout the room during the lesson to assure that all students are on the same page, or that they are completing the task properly, or have a clear understanding of the discussion. As the catechist walks through the room, student behavior and understanding can be redirected as needed. Students’ needs can be most effectively dealt with if the catechist is fortunate enough to have a co-teacher or aide assisting with the class.

### **Integrating the Message into Life Experience/Application to Life**

This is an area that is often overlooked by teachers/catechists as they attempt to cover ALL the material in a lesson and thus run out of time. It is important to give our students information/knowledge, but this information/knowledge will be better retained when it is connected to a real life experience that the student has encountered. Each lesson taught should include tying the material to real life experience.

This collation can be accomplished at the beginning of the lesson by assessing the students’ prior knowledge of the subject matter by asking what they already know about the topic. For instance, if the lesson is on the Eucharistic celebration, the catechist

could ask, “Who can share a time when you enjoyed a special meal with your family?” to introduce the lesson. The integration of the message into real life situations could take place during the lesson as well by pausing during the lesson and asking the students, “How would you feel if you were in this situation?” or “What would you have done in that situation?” The lesson can be tied to a life experience at the end of a lesson by asking, “So now, after hearing the story and discussing the questions, what are we called to do in our own lives?” or “How will you use what you learned in class today?”

### **Culminating Activities**

A culminating activity is one that ends the lesson by tying all the key components together. This might include an art project that sums up the lesson. This serves two purposes – 1) it allows the students to process what has been taught in a creative way and 2) serves as a means of “evangelizing” to parents regarding the topic learned. The culminating activity could be learning a song, completing a worksheet, reading a story, or assigning a homework assignment or project. Remember, the purpose of the culminating activity is to relate the important points of the lesson into a summary.

### **Student Assessment**

It is important to be aware of what your students are learning and what parts of the lesson may need further development to improve student understanding. Assessment is a way of “testing” what your students understand. This can be accomplished in formal or informal/casual ways.

Formal assessments may come in the form of tests, quizzes, recitation of traditional prayers, memorization of scripture, worksheets, or written assignments. These are items that were usually “graded.” But these are not the only ways our students can show understanding. They could participate in a play, or complete a project individually or as a group. They could create a story, poem, rap song, or piece of art related to the topic in such a way that you can assess that understanding was gained by the student.

Informal/casual assessments can be done instantaneously as the lesson is being taught. There are several fun and interactive ways to check for student understanding. Signal Cards can be used – in this method you give each student a green, red, and yellow card. Green means GO; yellow means CAUTION; and red means STOP. Students can monitor their own learning by letting you know they are keeping up with what you are saying and thus showing the green card; showing yellow would mean “slow down – I

am getting confused;” and red would indicate, “I am lost – I need some help.” The colored signal cards could also be used to answer questions such as green = always; yellow = sometimes; red = never. When using these cards, the catechist can see instantly where each student understands as they hold up the different colored cards.

Another variation of this instant response is the “thumbs up / thumbs down / thumbs sideways” approach. Thumbs up = yes/I agree; thumbs down = no/I disagree; Thumbs sideways = I am unsure/undecided. Any indicator, whether it is colored cards or hand signals could be a set response by the teacher, as long as the students know which indicator goes with the desired answer. For example: Thumbs up could mean Old Testament; Thumbs down could mean New Testament; and Thumbs sideways could mean both. Then the catechist would ask questions such as, “Where is the book of Genesis located?” or “You find information about the life of Jesus and the Apostles in this section of the Bible.”

Individual white boards could also be used to check for student understanding. As the catechist asks a question, the students write their response on the white board and then hold up the board for the teacher to see. (It is best if how to hold up the board is established before the activity to maintain classroom control.) If the teacher does not wish for the students to hold up the boards, she/he may walk around the room and easily and quickly check to see which students had the correct response. It is recommended that the answer be given out loud, and clarification explained so the students will know if they are correct or not.

### **Student Cooperation/Self-Regulation**

To have a successful and smooth running class, it is important that the catechist gain student cooperation. Behavior expectations must be given by the teacher at the beginning of the year, understood by all students, and consistently followed throughout the course of the year. Students could assist with formulating the class rules – ones that would benefit all students allowing for a safe and productive year. Students should be involved in assisting with passing out materials and caring/maintaining the classroom environment as they are able. This would be different in a class of preschoolers than it would be for a class of high school students. Students should be aware of the classroom rules and procedures – what is allowed/not allowed; how are supplies distributed; what is the procedure for dismissal/arrival; how do we exit the room in case of an emergency. When students know, understand and comply with these expectations, the lessons being taught are more effective and enjoyable for all.

## **Relational Interaction**

One of the most important components of being a catechist is how you relate to the students, parents, and colleagues. The best witness you can give is not solely by what you say, but how you act and treat others. Students watch your every move – you are a role model for them whether you mean to be or not. Thus it is important to work on sound relationship skills.

Student to Catechist/Catechist to Student – When relating to students it is important to remember that you are not their peer or their friend. You are an adult role model or a mentor to them. They look to you for leadership and to understand what is expected of them as they grow into adults. You may share appropriate portions of your life with your students so they gain a better understanding of who you are and the journey you have taken to this point in your life, but by NO MEANS do your students need to know EVERYTHING about you. There are some things that are private and personal to you that should not be shared with your students. You also need to make it clear to students that if they share something that can be harmful to themselves or others, you will and must share the information with their parents and the appropriate authorities (as the situation requires).

Catechist to Adults/Colleagues - It is important that you build relationship with the parents of the students you teach. These parents are entrusting you with their most precious possession, and it is your role to assist them in raising their children as Catholic Christians. They are counting on your help! Send notes home informing parents of what you will be covering in class. Ask for assistance on special project (be sure to check the Diocesan policy regarding volunteers). Be open to meeting with parents when concerns arise. Ask parents for assistance when you are having trouble reaching/relating to a student. Always begin the conversation with something positive that you have learned about their child, and then express the concern that you are experiencing. Chances are the parents know exactly what you are talking about and will have a solution to take care of it immediately. Approach parents as partners in this educational realm and realize you are playing on the same team -When this is established, the child benefits.

It is equally important that you make the effort and take the time to relate to the teachers and supervisors who work with you in the program/school. Together, you can assist each other by problem solving situations that arise in your classroom, share ideas for lesson plans, bulletin boards or prayer services, and support each other in your own

faith journeys. Be open and welcoming toward colleagues, parish workers, and your catechetical director/principal. These people are working with you to provide the best program possible to benefit the students. Together we make a difference for our students.

## BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING IN RELIGION

### RUBRIC ASSESSMENT TOOL

	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
Commitmtn	Students <b>are very actively engaged in integrating their faith</b> with everyday living.	Students are <b>engaged in integrating their faith</b> with everyday living	Students are <b>seldom challenged to integrate their faith</b> with everyday living.	Students <b>are not challenged to integrate their faith</b> with everyday living.
Community	The school provides a <b>rich faith community</b> experience. Students <b>consistently participate</b> in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school provides a <b>faith community</b> experience. Students <b>regularly participate</b> in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school's faith community is <b>weak, and/or not a central part of school life.</b> Students have <b>limited chances</b> to participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school provides a <b>very poor faith community</b> experience. Students have <b>very limited or no opportunities</b> to participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.
Conversation	Sharing personal, age-appropriate faith stories that support church doctrine is <b>actively encouraged and supported.</b>	Sharing personal, age-appropriate faith stories that support church doctrine is <b>encouraged.</b>	Personal faith sharing <b>may not</b> be age-appropriate or at times <b>in conflict</b> with church doctrine, and /or is <b>not supported.</b>	Personal faith sharing is <b>often not</b> age-appropriate, <b>in conflict</b> with church doctrine, and/or <b>not supported or actively discouraged.</b>
Compassion	<b>Consistent</b> opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	<b>Regular</b> Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	<b>Limited</b> Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	<b>Few or no</b> Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.
Celebration	The school provides <b>multiple</b> liturgical <i>and</i> non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides <b>multiple</b> liturgical <i>and</i> non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides <b>multiple</b> liturgical <i>and</i> non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides <b>multiple</b> liturgical <i>and</i> non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.

	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
Creed (Doctrine)	The religion curriculum <b>very effectively teaches the authentic doctrine</b> of the Catholic Church.	The religion curriculum <b>teaches the authentic doctrine</b> of the Catholic Church.	The religion curriculum's <b>foundation in the authentic doctrine of the catholic Church is weak.</b>	The religion curriculum is <b>unclear</b> , or relies on material or guidance documents <b>not in accord with the authentic doctrine</b> of the Catholic Church.
Sacraments	<b>Regular opportunities</b> to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is a <b>critical aspect of school life</b> and community celebration	<b>Periodic opportunities</b> to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is a <b>part of school life</b> and community celebration.	<b>Limited opportunities</b> to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation are <b>not important in school life</b> or community celebration	<b>Few or no opportunities</b> to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is not a focus of school life, and/ or is not connected to the community.
Living the Christian Life	Challenge of living the Christian life is <b>fully integrated and evident</b> in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities.	Challenge of living the Christian life is <b>somewhat integrated</b> in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities	Challenge of living the Christian life is <b>minimally integrated and evident</b> in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities	Challenge of living the Christian life is <b>absent</b> , in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities
Prayer	Students are <b>actively engaged in a wide range of opportunities</b> for prayer in a <b>variety of forms</b>	Students are in <b>engaged in regular opportunities</b> for prayer in <b>different forms.</b>	<b>Opportunities</b> for prayer are <b>limited</b> , and the kinds of prayer are <b>limited.</b>	<b>Opportunities</b> for prayer are <b>rare</b> , and are <b>extremely limited in kind.</b>

**RELIGION TEACHER’S SELF EVALUATION  
TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR RELIGION**

**School**

**Name of Teacher**

**Semester / Year**

*The following are strategies with research based implications that have been identified from WCEA School Self Studies, Religion In-Depth Studies, supervisory classroom observation and school faculty input. This form is designed to assist the Religion teacher in keeping an account of curriculum classroom strategies utilized over a period of a semester.*

<b>Acceptable Strategies for Teaching Religion</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Guided text lessons	
Oral Discussion	
Journal/Response writing and reflection	
Memorization (Prayers, basic church tenets, commandments, scriptures, etc.)	
Role play/dramatizations	
Discussion of current events issues from a Catholic perspective	
Scripture study	
Study of religious artwork	
Peer activities / group projects	
Integration across curricular areas (social justice issues in Social Studies; “cloning” in science)	
Oral presentations	
Research and written reports	
Peer tutoring	
Social justice units	
Liturgical year study	

<b>Acceptable Strategies for Teaching Religion</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Utilization of biblical text	
Story telling (flannel board for younger children	
Visual Aids	
Preparation for liturgies and prayer services on an appropriate developmental level	
Active student participation in liturgy and sacraments	
Modeling of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations	
Faith devotions (Marian, Lenten, etc.)	
Sharing of prayer throughout the day	
Prayer services	
Outreach programs (food bank, local and foreign missions)	
Retreats	
Participation in choir, altar server, lector programs	
Cross age mentorship in liturgy celebrations, service projects, etc.	
Varied prayer experiences (spontaneous, memorized, paraphrased, centering, meditative, reflective)	
Interaction with clergy	
Vocational experiences	
Celebrating faith traditions	
Opportunities to practice social justice	
Participation in poetry, art, song, and dance as forms of praise	
Conflict management/problem solving, through faith teaching	
Community outreach/service projects	
Opportunities for faith sharing/witness at school and at home	
Guest speakers	
Biblical re-enactments	
Sharing/praying for special intentions	
Textbook Assessment	
Observation and analysis of behavior, attitudes and participation	
Interpretation and application of ACRE testing results	
Rubric Assessment	

<b>Acceptable Strategies for Teaching Religion</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Portfolio Assessment	
Classroom discussion, journal responses	
Use of Technology	

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Teacher's Signature

## RELIGION TEACHER'S SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

This form is to be used as an end-of-the-year summative evaluation of a teacher of religion. It is designed both as a measure as well as an assessment of a teacher's effectiveness over the course of a school year. It should be based, at least, upon formal lesson evaluation, frequent walk-throughs, as well as general observations and records in relation to integration of the teacher into the overall life of the school.

Conferencing in relation to this form should be part of the teacher's end-of-the-year and should be included in the overall performance evaluation and placed in the teacher's personnel file.

School		
Name of Teacher	Date	
<b>The Religion Teacher:</b>	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1. Gives clear witness of Gospel values in the classroom and at school-related activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Accepts and implements the school philosophy and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Helps students see the relevance of Gospel values in their daily lives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Makes an effort to update his/her knowledge of the Catholic faith and keeps current with the Religious Certification/renewal program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Participates in building a faith community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prayer/Catholic Identity are woven throughout the school day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Creates a positive physical environment for catechesis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Shapes a social environment in which faith can be nurtured.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**The Religion Teacher:**

Signature: Evaluator

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Satisfactory      Needs  
Improvement

Date

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**RELIGION TEACHER'S WEEKLY LESSON PLAN**  
**WEEK OF \_\_\_\_\_**

LESSON TOPIC:

- 

LESSON OBJECTIVE – Students will learn:

- 
- 
- 
- 

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATION(S)

- 
- 
- 

GRADE LEVEL SUBJECT AREA EXPECTATIONS

- 
- 
- 

LITURGICAL SEASON:                      LITURGICAL CYCLE:

Cycle

IMPORTANT FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:

OPENING PRAYER:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

KEY WORDS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

ACTIVITIES:

Monday

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES:

ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

REVIEW:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO REMEMBER:

HOME CONNECTION:

CLASS CONNECTION:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

RELATED PROJECT(S):

ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION:

**RELIGION TEACHER'S WEEKLY LESSON PLAN (SAMPLE)**

**WEEK OF October 9, 2006**

LESSON TOPIC:

- The Church Celebrates Seven Sacraments

LESSON OBJECTIVE – Students will learn:

- Jesus gave the seven Sacraments
- The Sacraments of Initiation
- The Sacraments of Healing
- The Sacraments of Service to others

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATION(S) – refers to each school site SLEs:

- 
- 
- 

GRADE LEVEL SUBJECT AREA EXPECTATIONS

Complete all applicable in Curriculum Guidelines

LITURGICAL SEASON:

Ordinary Time

LITURGICAL CYCLE:

Cycle A

IMPORTANT FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH:

October is the Month of the Rosary

October 15 is the feast of St. Teresa of Avila

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:

John 15: 9-12

**OPENING PRAYER:**

Use "We Gather" prayers

Monday: p. 44

Tuesday: p. 46

Wednesday: p. 48

Thursday: p. 50

Friday: p. 52

**KEY WORDS:**

1. Sacrament - p. 45
2. Sanctifying grace – p. 45
3. Christian Initiation – p. 47
4. Common vocation – p. 47
5. Holiness – p. 47

**ACTIVITIES:**

Monday: Write a poem about one of the signs of God's love and presence in the world.

Tuesday: Draw a symbol of God's love.

Wednesday: Make cards for people in local nursing homes or design a magazine ad that tells about the Sacrament of Healing.

Thursday: Show and tell memorabilia from home.

Friday: Look up communities of Priests on the Internet. Identify their principle mission: Teaching, health care, missions, cloister, etc.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Monday: Paper and pencils/pens

Tuesday: Paper, markers, crayons, glue

Wednesday: Paper, markers, crayons, glue

Thursday: Materials from home

Friday: Internet access, paper and pencil/pen

**MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES:**

Internet to look up Communities of Priests

**ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:**

**STUDENT RESPONSE:**

Ask: "We Respond" questions

Monday: Oral response

Tuesday Written response

Wednesday: Make cards for the people at the local nursing home.

Thursday: Show and tell memorabilia from home.

Friday: Look up an order of priests on the Internet.

**REVIEW:**

Use "Quick Check" on Monday and Tuesday

Monday: Oral Response

Tuesday: Written Response

Wednesday: Make cards for the people at the local nursing home.

Thursday: Black Line Master, page 43G

Friday: Use assessment on page 52 in the student text.

**WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO REMEMBER:**

Vocabulary

Names of the Sacraments

Type of Sacrament: Initiation, Healing, Service

**HOME CONNECTION:**

Bring in Baptismal Certificate, Baptismal Candle, pictures from Baptism, Baptismal gift/dress, Marriage Certificate, Wedding Pictures, Pictures of a friend or relative who is a priest.

**CLASS CONNECTION:**

Class Project: Mosaics of Sacraments, page 43c in teacher manual.

Start on day one.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTION:**

Identify an area of need in the community. Invite students to participate in a way that addresses this need. (Mowing the lawn of an elderly neighbor; baby sitting for free while a young mother does her grocery shopping; visit a sick person for one-half hour; look for a newspaper story that shows reconciliation; etc.)

RELATED PROJECT(S):

Class-wide service project for the year.

ASSESSMENT:

Page 52 of student text; mosaic project with presentation to the class; black-line master on page 43c in teacher's manual.

EVALUATION:

How did it go? What was good? What was better? What was Best? How will I do it differently next time?

*Reference:* William H. Sadlier, Inc., **We Believe**, Grade 5, Sacraments.